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1739

A VINDICATION OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, AND A Future State.

By *WILLIAM ASSHETON*, D.D.
Rector of *Beckenham* in *Kent*, and Chaplain to His Grace the Duke of *ORMOND*.

LONDON:
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A

TO THE

Illuſtrious His GRACE

JAMES

Duke of *ORMOND*, &c.

Chancellor of the Univerſities of *Oxford* and *Dublin*, Knight of the Moſt Noble Order of the *Garter*, and Lord Lieutenant General, and General Governor of the Kingdom of *Ireland*.

May it pleaſe your Grace,

AS *your Grace is moſt Fortunately Circumſtanced in this World, (and may you long enjoy the Favour of your Prince, and the Ap-*

plauses of the People), so 'tis the earnest and hearty Prayer of your Obliged Chaplain, that you may be Eternally Happy in the next. And that he may be an Instrument in the Hand of God (who often works by weak Means) to so desirable an End, he very humbly submits the following Discourse to your Grace's Censure.

The Scepticism and Infidelity of the present Age, is too Notorious to be Dissembled. 'Tis not only Practised, but Encouraged. For, as some have been so Impudent to Burlesque and Ridicule the Christian Faith, so others have been so Wicked as to Applaud and Defend them.

But when Those of your Grace's Eminence shall be so sensible of their Duty to God and the Queen, as to Defend our Faith as well as our Lives, we may then comfortably expect that Reformation of Manners, which hath been so much pretended, and I hope,

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in some Instances, sincerely endeavoured.

Blessed be God, we have a Queen, who sincerely endeavours the Reformation of all Her Subjects. Her Majesty doth not only Discountenance Vice by Her own Virtuous Example, but also by Her Authority, in those repeated Proclamations, which the Clergy are Commanded not only to Publish, but also to Explain and Enforce, as Occasion shall require. That this may effectually be done, we are to Reform Mens Principles as well as their Practices. For whilst some are so Stupid as to fancy, That they have no Immortal Souls; but that after Death they shall be Nothing; whilst they flatter themselves to Die like Brutes, we have little cause to wonder that they Live like them too.

But I crave the Freedom, under the Protection of your Grace's Name, to assure them, it is most Certain, That when they Die, and leave this

World,

World, they shall not then Perish like the Brutes, and cease to Be; but shall still Live and Subsist, either in Happiness or Misery, to all Eternity.

This I have endeavoured to Confirm with the greatest Plainness; and God grant it may have its due Effect upon them.

And now I am sensible it will be expected, by all true Lovers of the House of Ormond, *that I should make some due Acknowledgment of your Grace's Worth and Greatness.*

With what Valour and Conduct you behav'd your self in several Campaigns? With what Generousness of Spirit, your Grace promoted the Publick Welfare, and consulted the Reputation of England, *with the Neglect, if not the Hazard of your own private Interest?*

I have here a very large and pleasing Subject. And if your Grace's Modesty would permit, I could say much of my own

own Knowledge. For as I am the Oldest Domestick Chaplain now Living, to your Grace's Grandfather of Renowned Memory, I had thereby the daily Satisfaction to observe the Budding Hopes of your Future Greatness.

What I did then happily Presage, I have now lived to see; That your Grace is an Ornament to your Family, and a Publick Blessing to your Country. And that your Grace may long so continue, is the Hearty Prayer of,

(May it please Your Grace)

Your Grace's Most Dutiful
and Humbly Devoted Chaplain,

William Assheton.

THE

INTRODUCTION.

THE chief Cauſe of all the Wickedneſs and Prophaneneſs that abounds in the World, is the not Believing, or not Conſidering *the Immortality of the Soul*, and *a Future State*. For did Men firmly Believe, and then ſeriouſly conſider, Meditate, and think upon this great Truth; *That when they Die and leave this World, they ſhall not then periſh like the Brutes, and ceaſe to Be*; But their Souls, when ſeparated from their Bodies, ſhall ſtill live, and perform the Rational Operations of *Underſtanding* and *Will*; ſhall have Pleaſure or Pain, even in the State of Separation: And at the laſt, when the great and terrible

Day of the Lord ſhall come, then their Souls ſhall again be united to their Bodies, and ſhall never be parted more; but in an unexpreſſible manner ſhall be happy or miſerable to all Eternity: I ſay, did Men firmly believe, and ſeriouſly conſider theſe Things, *O what manner of Perſons would they then be in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs.*

And therefore, for the Conviction of all looſe ſenſual *Epicureans* and *Deiſts*, whoſe hope is only in this Life; and for the Confirmation and Eſtabliſhment of honeſt ſincere, but weak doubting Chriſtians, I ſhall ſtrictly examine, and by the Aſſiſtance of the B. Spirit, ſhall endeavour to confirm this great Truth, *That the Soul of Man is Immortal*; and that *there is another Life after this.*

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VINDICATION

OF THE

Immortality of the Soul, &c.

AS preparatory to my Discourse, and that what I am to say, may be the more favourably received, I shall Premise these following Considerations.

1. *We are not to be surprized that this Truth is contradicted.* Bold forward Men, that are confident and assuming; *whose Tongues*, as they fancy, *are their own*; and who take the freedom to say what they list, may Railly and Banter the Immortality of the Soul.

Men may speak sharply and wit-

tily againſt the cleareſt things in the World. As the *Scepticks* of old did againſt all Certainty of Senſe and Reaſon. Theſe Sophiſters would pretend to prove, that there is no Sun in the Firmament, and that Snow is not White. But for all their Wit and vain Philoſophy, we ſhould think that man out of his Senſes, that would now diſpute the Being of the Sun, or the Colour of the Snow.

2. *When we endeavour to prove the Immortality of the Soul, its Oppoſers muſt accept of ſuch Proof, as the nature of the thing will admit.* All Truths are not equally Evident, nor are capable of the ſame manner of Proof. Spiritual incorporeal Beings are not to be proved by our Senſes. I hope therefore theſe Sceptical Gentlemen do not expect, to *ſee* a ſeparate Soul with their Eyes, to *hear* it with their Ears, or

to

to *graſp* it with their Hands. Some men indeed have been ſo vain as to fancy, That if the Soul of ſome deceaſed Friend ſhould appear to them after his Death, and ſhould diſtinctly declare, how and in what manner he doth live in another World, that then they would be convinced, That the Soul is Immortal. But alas! vain men, they are miſtaken: For *if they hear not Moſes and the Prophets, neither will they be perſwaded though one roſe from the dead.* Luk. 16. 31.

3. *In this Diſpute concerning the Immortality of the Soul, I do ſuppoſe That there is a God.* For unleſs this be granted, the beſt Arguments for the Soul's Immortality do loſe their force. But I hope I may fairly be allowed to ſuppoſe the Exiſtence of God: Not only becauſe thoſe *Deiſts* themſelves, who deny the Immortality of the Soul, do pretend to

acknowledge that there is a God; but chiefly becauſe this *firſt* and great Principle of Religion, *That there is a God*; hath been ſo often, and ſo undeniably confirmed by others.

4. *The Arguments I deſign to inſiſt upon, ſhall not be nice and Philoſophical, but Plain and Popular.* It was, as the Learned *Biſhop Stillingfleet* obſerves, the great Miſtake of the Heathen Philoſophers, that their Diſcourſes about the Immortality of the Soul, were too ſubtle and intricate for the common Capacities of Men. 'How long might a man 'live, as the ſame judicious Prelate 'remarks, before an *Entelechia* would 'make him know the nature of his 'Soul the better; or an αὐτοκινησία 'perſuade him to believe its Im-'mortality? Inſomuch that it is 'hard to determine, whether the 'Arguments uſed by them, did

'not

'not rather hinder aſſent, than 'perſuade to it. For, plain Truths 'loſe much of their weight, when 'they are rarified into Subtleties, 'and their ſtrength is impaired 'when they are ſpun into too fine 'a Thread.

The Immortality of the Soul, is a Truth of the greateſt concernment: our Eternal Happineſs or Miſery depends upon it; and therefore a matter of ſo great conſequence as this is, ought to be propoſed in the moſt plain, moſt familiar, and moſt convincing Manner.

Theſe things being Premiſed, I now proceed to my Proofs, when I have firſt explained the terms of the Propoſition, by ſhewing,

1. *What is meant by the Soul?*

2. *What is denoted by the Immortality of the Soul?*

1. *What is meant by the Soul?*

I Shall not pretend to give you an exact Philosophical Definition of the Soul. But shall describe it in a plain and familiar Manner. Both *Negatively*, and *Positively*.

1. *Negatively*. The Soul of Man is not his Body: but something that is different and distinct from the Body. For the Body is the visible and sensible Part of Man, which is known and distinguished by our outward Senses. But the Soul being a Spirit, hath neither Flesh nor Bones, nor any Bodily Parts: and consequently can be neither *seen* nor *felt*, nor otherwise be discerned by any of our Senses. And in this our Blessed Saviour doth plainly instruct us. For when he would convince his Disciples after his Resurrection, that the Body where-

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in he appeared to them was a real Body, and that he was not a Spirit; he bids them *touch* and *handle him.* For ſaith he, *a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones as ye ſee me have.* Luk. 24. 39. The Soul therefore is not *Corporeal,* It hath no groſs nor *material* Parts: but is of ſuch a nature as doth not fall under the notice of any of our Senſes.

And as the Soul is not the Body, ſo likewiſe it is not *the Life of the Body.* Which I affirm in oppoſition to the Author of *Second Thoughts concerning Human Soul.* Who tells us, He preſumes he hath very good grounds to aſſert, *Life to be properly Human Soul.* And pretends to prove, That *Life and Soul are the ſame thing in Scripture.*

In Anſwer to whom we readily grant, that very often in Scripture, the *Soul* is called the *Life,* and *Life* the *Soul.* But then the expreſſion

is

is only Figurative, the Effect being put for the Cause. For to speak properly, the Soul is not Life, but the Cause of Life; and Life is not the Soul, but the Effect and Consequent of the Soul. And this Author himself doth grant, 'That 'the *Effect in many cases is taken in* 'a *vulgar acceptation for the Cause.* 'For *example, a man says, the Sun* 'is *so hot in such or such a Place, that* 'he *cannot endure it. Where it is plain* 'he *means the heat of the Sun, the* 'Effect *of it, and not the Sun it self,* 'which *is the Cause of that heat,* &c. pag. 189.

And whereas he pretends to prove, That *Life and Soul are the same thing in Scripture.* Our Blessed Saviour, who best knows the nature of the Soul, doth otherwise instruct us. *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.* Mat. 10. 28.

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In this Text we are plainly admoniſhed of two Things. 1. That *Soul* and *Body* are different diſtinct Beings; ſince they who *kill the Body, are not able to kill the Soul.* 2. By *Soul* is not meant the *Life.* For then the Text ſhould be thus Tranſlated: *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to take away the Life.* Which wreſted Interpretation is contrary to common Senſe, and is by no means to be admitted, though ſupported by the Authority of Mr. *Hobbs.* Who very Magiſterially, without the leaſt Proof, tells us, that in this Text, *Body* and *Soul*, is no more than *Body* and *Life.* V. *Leviath.* p. 340. But our preſent *moſt Reverend* Metropolitan (in the Creed of Mr. *Hobbs* Examined. p. 78.) doth thus Correct him.

'Your Gloſs is extreamly wide 'of the unwreſted meaning of the 'holy

'holy Text. For our Saviour 'counſelleth his Apoſtles *not to fear* 'them that can kill the Body, *but are* 'not able to kill the Soul; making 'a manifeſt diſtinction thereby be- 'twixt the Soul and the Life of the 'Body. For if the Soul were no- 'thing but the Life of the Body, it 'were in the Power of every man to 'kill our Souls, unto whoſe Sword 'and Malice our Lives lay open.

2. *Poſitively.* The Soul is that Principle which is not only the Cauſe of *external* Life and Motion in the Body; but alſo of ſeveral *internal* Operations; which by inward Senſe and Experience we are conſcious to our ſelves of: As *Underſtanding*, *Memory*, and *Will.* Briefly thus.

The Soul is ſomething in us which we never ſaw; and which is the Cauſe of thoſe Effects which we find to be in our Selves. We *See*, we *Hear*, we *Smell*, we *Taſte*, we

we *Touch*. But it is the Soul only which performs these Operations; or by which these Operations are performed in the Body. For immediately after Death, as soon as ever the Soul is separated from the Body, though all the Parts and Organs do still remain, the Body is a dead Carkass, without Life and Motion. Like the Idols of the Heathen; it hath *a mouth, and speaks not: Eyes and sees not: Ears and hears not: a Nose and smells not: Hands and handles not: Feet and walks not*: Psal. 115. 5, 6, 7.

But, besides these visible Actions of our outward Senses, there are other Operations of a more Spiritual refined Nature, which we are conscious of. We *Think* and *Remember*, we *Reason* and *Discourse*, we freely *Chuse* and *Refuse* such Things as are presented to us. All these Operations we undeniably find

find and perceive to be in our Selves. Now that which is the Principle of these Operations, and the Cause from whence they proceed, is that which we mean by the Soul of Man.

2. *What is denoted by the Immortality of the Soul?*

THE true Signification of the word *Immortal* is this. That is said to be Immortal, *That liveth for ever. That never dyeth. That never shall decay. That shall never perish. That shall never have an End.*

When, therefore, we affirm that the Soul is Immortal, we plainly intend this:

That when the Body dies, and is laid in the Grave, and is there turned into dust; the Soul doth still remain, and lives separate from the Body. It still continues to perform all those Operations, to the per-

performance of which, the Members and Organs of the Body are not neceſſary. It ſtill retains the power of *Underſtanding*; it *Thinks*, and *Reaſons*, and *Remembers*. I ſay, when the Soul hath left the Body, though the Body is then deſtitute of Life, and becomes a dead Carkaſs, yet the Soul ſtill lives in an active ſtate, either of Happineſs or Miſery, and ſhall live and continue to all Eternity.

And that the Soul of Man is thus *Immortal*, I ſhall, through Divine Aſſiſtance, endeavour to confirm from theſe following Conſiderations.

The Immortality of the Soul is

1. *Deſirable.*
2. *Poſſible.*
3. *Probable.*
4. *Certain.*

Now the reaſon why I propoſe this gradual Proof, is this, becauſe there

there are Two ſorts of Men who are to be convinc'd.

There are ſome who acknowledge no other than Natural Religion; who reject all Revelation, and conſequently the Holy Scriptures. And therefore, ſince all Diſcourſe muſt be *ex conceſſis*, theſe Men muſt be treated in their own way; that is, from ſuch Principles as they themſelves will grant.

With theſe *Epicurean* Deiſts, I ſhall diſcourſe from the *Three* former Topicks; and ſhall endeavour to convince them, That the Immortality of the Soul is 1. *Deſirable.* 2. *Poſſible.* 3. *Probable.* But further than thus I ſhall not pretend to proceed with theſe Deiſts. For the Soul being *Inviſible*, and *the Life to come* being an Abſent and Inviſible State, can admit only of Moral Proof and Evidence, or of Divine Proof from Revelation. And ſince

theſe

these *Epicureans* do reject Divine Revelation, I can only treat them from the *Three* former Topicks. But as for those who acknowledge the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, as all Christians, and in particular, the Author of a late Tract called, *Second Thoughts concerning Human Soul*, pretend to do; I shall give them the utmost Proof; and do hope to convince them by the Testimony of God himself, That it is *Certain the Human Soul is Immortal.*

1. *Desirable.*

1. IT is very *Desirable* that the Soul should be Immortal, and that there should be another Life after this.

I Premise this Consideration, as a necessary Introduction to my following Proofs. For unless I can perswade these *Deists*, that what

I propoſe is for their Advantage, and that it is their Intereſt to be Convinced, the moſt cogent Arguments will not be regarded. If Men will be Obſtinate, and let us ſay what we can, will believe as they liſt; If this be the Caſe, there is no Remedy, it is in vain to Diſcourſe them. For Man is a free Agent, and hath liberty of Choice; and therefore it is impoſſible to make a Man to *Believe* againſt his Will. If theſe Men will not open their Eyes, but are reſolved to wink hard, and will then Diſpute, nay perhaps Swear, there is no Sun in the Firmament, who can Convince them? *Pertinaciæ nullum remedium poſuit Deus.* God hath provided no Remedy for the Obſtinacy of Men. But if they will be thus Obdurate, and are Reſolved to be Miſerable, we can only Bewail them, we cannot Help them.

However,

However, we will not ceaſe, according to our Duty, to Pray for them.

That *God would open their Eyes, and to turn them from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they may receive Forgiveneſs of Sins, and Inheritance among them which are Sanctified, by Faith, that is in Chriſt*, Acts 26.18.

And in Order to their Conviction, I ſhall, *Firſt*, plainly repreſent to them; *That it is very Deſirable that the Soul ſhould be Immortal, and that there ſhould be another Life after this.*

That we muſt all Die, and leave this World, is ſo certain a Truth, as not to be Diſputed. The Examples of thoſe who have gone before us, have made it ſo Evident, that the greateſt Sceptick is thus far convinced. Since then 'tis Undeniable we muſt ſhortly Die, and

leave this World, is it not at leaſt deſirable that ſome Part of us may ſtill Live and Subſiſt in another?

For ſhould Death put an utter End to us; ſhould all our Hopes, and all our Comforts expire with us, and be laid in our Graves; what a Diſmal and Melancholy Thought would this be? What Regret and Horror doth it raiſe in us? How doth even Nature ſhrink at it?

Indeed there are ſome Calamitous Circumſtances, which have called for Death; and under which, Men have been ſo weary of this World, as to deſire to leave it. For, as *Job* Phraſeth it, *Wherefore is Light given to him that is in Miſery, and Life unto the Bitter in Soul? which long for Death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for Hid Treaſures; Which rejoyce exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the Grave. There*

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the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary be at reſt. There the Priſoners reſt together, they hear not the voice of the Oppreſſor, Job 3. 20, 21, 22, 17, 18.

From theſe Words of *Job*, and alſo from daily Experience, it evidently appears; That in ſome Caſes, and under ſome Circumſtances, Death is very deſirable, tho' it ſhould terminate in Annihilation, and utter Extinction.

For when a Man hath all his Life long been Oppreſſed with Calamities, Pinched with Poverty, Clouded with Diſgrace, or Afflicted with Pungent Tormenting Pains, it may ſeem deſirable, not only to Die, but even to be Nothing; that ſo he may have that Reſt in the Grave, which he could not find above Ground. *Præſtat non eſſe quam miſerum eſſe*, is a known Determination.

Thus I grant it may be in some particular Instance. But as to those who are Prosperous, and at Ease, the Case is far different. *O Death*, (saith the Son of *Sirach*) *how Bitter is the Remembrance of thee to a Man that liveth at Rest in his Possessions, to the Man that hath nothing to vex him, but hath Prosperity in all things*, Eccluſ. 41. 1.

You who are Rich and Great, Vigorous and Healthful, who have Stately Houses, Beautiful Gardens, Pleasant Accommodations, and in every other Respect, Good Treatment in the World; are you not much Troubled that you must so suddenly leave them? Is it not some Check to your Thoughts, that all these Fine Things must so soon be Exchanged for a Dark Hole under Ground? Do you not cling and hold fast as long as you can? And when you observe you can stay no

longer,

longer, but must be gone, do you not at least wish, that you might live once more, to meet and enjoy the old Companions of your former Pleasures?

O could you but creep out of your Graves into the *Elysian Fields*, there to be Treated with *Nectar* and *Ambrosia*, and some other Delights which a Carnal Fancy would Dictate; Could this be supposed, O ye Sensual *Deists*, who so earnestly contend for Annihilation, and are so fond to be reduced to Nothing, I say, I appeal to your selves, Would not such a Life as this, in such Company, and with such pleasing Enjoyments, be far better and more desirable than to be Nothing?

Would not a *Mahomet*'s Paradise be better than None?

Which being granted, I thus improve the Thought, and build upon your own Foundation.

If it is thus desirable to Live for Ever as *Brutes*, is it not much more desirable to live for ever as *Men*?

That this may be rightly understood, and may make its due Impression, I shall briefly remind you what it is to live as *Men*.

To live as *Men*, is to live in the Exercise of those *Rational* Faculties which are proper to us as *Men*. I say proper to us as *Men*: There being other Faculties, called *Animal*, or *Sensitive*, which are common to us with *Brutes*.

Whilst we are in this World, we must live an *Animal* Life as well as a *Rational*. We must, for the support of our decaying Bodies, *Eat* and *Drink* and *Sleep*, and perform other Offices of a Natural Life. But this is not properly the Life of a Man: Which consists, I say, in the Exercise of his Rational Faculties; which are these *Two*, his *Understanding* and his *Will*.

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The Object of the *Understanding* is *Truth.* The Object of the *Will* is *Goodness.*

1. *To Understand, is to Know and Embrace Truth.* And how great a Pleasure this is, and what ravishing Satisfaction flows in this way, they who Value and Improve their Understandings, are capable to resolve you. With what an eager Concern do some Men pant in the pursuit of Knowledge? They deprive themselves of their beloved Sleep; They neglect their daily Food, and have scarce leisure to attend to the Necessities of Life. Nay, even Life it self, in some Cases, hath been too much neglected. For to omit those who by Immoderate Study have ruined their Bodies, and have brought upon themselves the *Stone*, the *Gout*, and *Consumption*, with other Chronical Distempers; I shall Instance only in the hard Fate of *Archimedes*, who

who ſacrificed his Life to the Pleaſure of a Demonſtration. For had that Great Man but a little intermitted his Thought, he had certainly ſaved his Life. But being ſo intent upon his Scheme, that he took no notice of the Meſſage from *Marcellus*, the Rude Soldier, who little underſtood what he was doing, and who thought perhaps, he had ſlighted both him and his General, to the great Grief of *Marcellus*, kill'd him with his Sword.

What ſtrength of Imagination was here! What height of Speculation was this, that would not be Interrupted by ſuch imminent Danger!

But we have a further Inſtance from the ſame *Archimedes*, of the Pleaſure of the Mind in the Search of Truth. With what Tranſport of Joy he cried out, εὕρηκα, on another occaſion, is ſufficiently known.

From

From these, and such like Instances, we are undeniably convinced, that the perception of Truth, which we call Knowledge, is very pleasing to a Rational Being; and that the Eye of the Soul, the Understanding, is even Transported in the Contemplation of it: and so far Transported, that the highest Gratifications of Sense are mean and contemptible; nay, even as nothing to the Rapture of a Thought. For as *Plutarch* somewhere observes, When did any *Epicure* cry out Βέβρωκα with so much Joy, as *Archimedes* did Εὕρηκα?

Now if Knowledge in this Life is so Transporting, how Ravishing, may we suppose, will it be in the next?

Our Knowledge in this Life is very Imperfect, and consequently, the Satisfaction we receive from it is proportionably Imperfect. *But when that*

that which is Perfect is come, then that which is imperfect, or in Part, shall be done away. For now we see through a Glass, Darkly, but then Face to Face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known, 1 Cor. 13. 10, 12.

We see now *through a Glass*; δι' ἐσόπτρου, *tanquam in Speculo*, as in a Mirror. In which we do not see the thing it self immediately, and directly; but only the Image and Appearance of it by Reflection.

Or else, We see *through a Glass, tanquam in Perspectivâ, vel Inspectorio*; as through a Perspective, whereby an Object is viewed, not only by Reflection, but also at a Distance.

We now see through a Glass, *Darkly*, ἐν αἰνίγματι, *in a Riddle*. Which is an Obscure, a Doubtful, and Perplexing Declaration of a Thing. But then *Face to Face*. That is, *Then*, in the other World; we shall not

see

ſee God at a Diſtance, as we do now by Faith, which is our Perſpective; nor by Reflection, as we now ſee him in the Glaſs of the Creatures; but we ſhall have an immediate and direct view of him. *We ſhall ſee him Face to Face*, that is, Openly, Plainly, and Diſtinctly. For *then we ſhall know, as alſo we are known.* that is, as God now knows us, ſo ſhall we then know him, as to the Truth and Certainty of our Knowledge.

But we ſhall not only *Know* God in the other World, but we ſhall *Love* him, and *Enjoy* him. For as our *Underſtandings* ſhall know and enjoy God as he is *Truth*, ſo our *Wills* ſhall Love and Embrace Him as He is *Goodneſs*. For,

2. *Goodneſs is the Object of the Will, as Truth is of the Underſtanding.*

And there is an unexhauſtible Foun-

Fountain of both in God: For the Divine Perfections are Infinite; and consequently, can never fully be discovered by Finite Creatures. O! what ravishing Satisfaction will the Soul then enjoy, when its Rational Faculties, the Understanding, and the Will, do so vigorously employ and exercise themselves upon their proper Objects? How will every new discovery of Truth, and every new degree of Goodness, raise and enlarge the Soul, and encrease its Joy and Pleasure? For when the Soul shall break loose from the Body, which doth now clog and confine it; and hath made its Entrance into the Invisible Regions of Blessedness, how sprightly and active, how lightsome and cheerful will she feel her self? Oh! into what excellent Conversation will she then be admitted, when she *comes unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the Living*

Living God, the Heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an Innumerable Company of Angels, to the General Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect, and to Jeſus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24. Oh! What Bleſſed Society is here? Who is not Tranſported with the Expectation of it?

Society is the Deſire and Satisfaction of a Rational Being; and the Poſſeſſion of the whole World would be uneaſie without it. *It is not good for the Man to be alone*, was declared concerning *Adam*, whilſt in Paradiſe, and in Innocency. And were it poſſible for a Man to remain alone for many years in the moſt Beautiful Palace, it would not pleaſe him ſo well as the meaneſt Cottage with Company.

But,

But, alas! in this World, that which is our Desire, is too often our Torment. For though Conversation is very desirable, and most Men are out of Humour till they can get into Company, yet it is certainly one of the greatest Torments of Humane Life, to suffer the Follies, the Impertinencies, and Rudeness of Ill-natur'd, and Ill-bred People. Nay, even sometimes those who are otherwise Wise and Good Men, are subject to such Weaknesses and Mistakes as may make their Conversation very uneasie. But in Heaven, *the Spirits of just Men are made Perfect.* That is, They are freed from Ignorance and Self-interest, and all those unsociable Passions of Envy and Jealousie, of Malice and Revenge. They are perfectly refined from all that Folly and Peevishness, that Disguise and Dissimulation, which is the Bane of Conversation in this World. There,

There, in those Blessed Regions, is perfect *Knowledge*, and perfect *Love*; Knowledge to instruct in all the wise Arts of Endearment, and Love to oblige, to use and improve them.

O what happy Conversation must this needs be!

But now, how this Blessed Conversation is managed, and wherein the Happiness of Heaven doth consist, no Human Language can fully express. Only I shall endeavour to give such a short, tho' imperfect Idea of it, as that you shall confess, that it is at least very *Desirable* there should be such a Happiness, and that the Soul should be Immortal, for ever to enjoy it.

Hearken then, O ye *Sceptical Deists*, and be instructed: Hear what the Holy Scriptures, those Oracles of Truth, do declare concerning that Future Happiness; and then 'tis

hoped, you will at leaſt have *Balaam's* Wiſh; *Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my laſt end be like his*, Numb. 23. 10.

And *Firſt*, Theſe Holy Scriptures do declare; That there is a Place called *The Heaven of Heavens*; the *Higheſt Heaven*; as being far above and beyond theſe viſible Heavens.

A Deſcription of Heaven.

THat there is ſomething above and beyond this lower Region of the Air, we plainly ſee with our Eyes.

We ſee the Sun, the Moon, and a multitude of Stars, more than we can number (though he who made them can *tell their Number, and call them all by their Names.*)

At what diſtance theſe Globes of Fire are placed, notwithſtanding the Boldneſs of Aſtronomical Conjectures,

ctures, we are wholly ignorant. But this we may obſerve, and may rationally conjecture from the *Frame* and *Compages* of the *World*, That there are inviſible Regions, but how many we know not, far above and beyond theſe viſible Orbs. The higheſt of which is the Royal Palace of the King of Kings, the Great Sovereign of the Univerſe: In which, as in His Preſence-Chamber, He doth glorioufly diſcover His Majeſty, His Greatneſs, and His Goodneſs, to Angels and Men. *There Thouſands Thouſands miniſter unto Him, and Ten Thouſand times Ten Thouſand ſtand before Him*, Dan. 7. 10.

And not only theſe Glorious Angels, who are now his peculiar Retinue, but alſo poor Fallen Man, through the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall one day make up the number of that

Heavenly Train. These *His Servants shall serve him, and they shall see His Face*, Rev. 22. 3, 4. *For we know*, saith St. *Paul*, *that if our Earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 1.

And St. *Peter* assures us, that there is *an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us*, 1 Pet. 1. 4.

The which Testimonies of S. *Peter* and S. *Paul* are thus comfortably confirmed by our Blessed Saviour. *Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's House are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto my self, that where I am, there ye may be also*, John 14. 1, 2, 3.

Fa-

Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me, John 17. 24.

But though Heaven is a most glorious Place, very Richly furnished and adorned, for Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Goodness hath contrived and prepared it, yet a Local Splendor, without some farther Qualifications, will not make us happy.

For to speak properly, Happiness is *Internal*, in the Frame and Temper of the Mind: without which suitable Disposition, all External Accommodations will be vain and nothing. Which I thus explain and confirm.

Some Men do very much value Stately Apartments; Plentiful Tables; Richly Furnished Beds; choice Consorts of Musick; Youth and Beauty, and such like. But now

were these very Men, in the midst of these external Accommodations, wrack'd with the *Stone*, or but the *Gout* in Extremity, all these fine Trappings would be little regarded.

This familiar Comparison may sensibly instruct us, that there is more required to the Happiness of Heaven, than the Splendor of the Place. For,

Secondly, The Happy Inhabitants of that Glorious Place are perfectly secured from all Pains of Body, and Discomposure of Mind, which are so pressing, and so frequent in this lower World, that we very pertinently call it *the Vale of Tears.*

But in Heaven all Tears shall be wiped away, and the causes of them. *And God Himself shall be with Men, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes; and there shall be no more Death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there*

be

be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Rev. 21.3,4. *The former things are passed away.* That is, All those Evils, Troubles, and Calamities which they saw and suffered in this World, will for ever vanish and disappear. There shall be no Poverty, no Sickness, nor no Pain to torment our Bodies: There shall be no Cares to distract our Minds, nor Fears and Disappointments to perplex our hearts, and discompose our Souls.

But this, though Great, and very desirable, is but a *Negative* Happiness. Therefore,

Thirdly, Besides this freedom from Misery and Sorrow, in Heaven there shall be a perfect enjoyment of all that is Good. And,

1. *In Heaven we shall have a most intimate enjoyment of Almighty God.*

How that Blessed Being will then communicate Himself to His Creatures, we cannot now distinctly ex-

plain, (*for we know but in part*, and *see through a Glass darkly*,) but we may with certainty apprehend, he will do it in a manner suitable to the Nature of Rational Beings. Now God being a Rational Good, is capable of being enjoyed by Rational Beings, no otherwise than by *Knowledge*, and by *Love*, and by *Likeness*.

That our enjoyment of God doth consist in *Knowledge*, is plainly intimated by St. *John*. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John 3. 2.

It doth not yet appear what we shall be. That is, whilst we are in this World, our future State is very obscure to us, and we know little of it, as to any distinct and particular knowledge. For in things which depend upon Divine Revelation,

and

and such certainly is our future State, it is impossible for us to know any more than God is pleased to reveal to us.

He hath plainly assured us in general, That Good Men shall be happy in another World: But the particular Circumstances of this Happiness are still conceal'd from us. Not as if God did envy us the satisfaction of a further Prospect, (we must not have such apprehensions of so Blessed a Being) but because we cannot bear it. *We cannot see God and live*: That is, the Imperfection of Human Nature, and the weakness of our Faculties in this State of Mortality, is not able to bear a full and clear representation of so great a Glory. And therefore the greatness of that Glory is now hid from our Eyes, not because we *should* not understand it, but because we *cannot*. In short: As the sweet-

ness

neſs of any Fruit is only known by the Taſte; ſo Heaven is beſt known by the Enjoyment of it. *When we awake up after his likeneſs, we ſhall be ſatisfied with it.*

Only thus much we know of it at preſent, becauſe our Saviour hath expreſly revealed it, that the Bleſſedneſs of the Saints ſhall conſiſt in *the Viſion of God. Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Matth. 5. 8. And, *We ſhall ſee him face to face*, 1 Cor. 13. 12.

I hope theſe *Deiſts* (who are very apt to Ridicule what they have no mind to Believe) will not ſo groſly miſrepreſent our *Seeing of God*, as if we did expect to ſee him with our Bodily Eyes. For God being a pure Spirit, cannōt be the Object of any Corporeal Senſe. But we ſhall have ſuch a ſight of him, as a pure Spirit is capable of. We

ſhall

ſhall ſee him with the Underſtanding, which is the Eye of the Soul. So that to See God is to Know him: And to Know God is to Enjoy him. For the more we know him, ſuch is his Greatneſs, the more we ſhall *Admire* him. And the more we know him, ſuch is his Goodneſs, the more we ſhall *Love* him. And the more we *Know* him, and *Love* him, the more we ſhall Imitate and Reſemble him: When *we ſee him as he is*, then *we ſhall be like him*, 1 John 3. 2. Or, as St. *Peter* Phraſeth it, we ſhall *be partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. Not that we ſhall be made partakers of the very Eſſence and Nature of God, as ſome Ignorant *Enthuſiaſts* have Blaſphemouſly affirmed; but we ſhall be made partakers of a Divine Temper and Diſpoſition, as the word φύσις often ſignifies, by having the Divine Attributes more and

more

more communicated to us. We ſhall be made like unto God in his *Holineſs*, in his *Goodneſs*, in his *Patience*, in his *Mercy*, in his *Juſtice*, and in his *Truth*.

Theſe Divine Qualities will make us fit Company for our Heavenly Father. For unleſs we endeavour to be like God by this God-like Temper and Diſpoſition, we can never be admitted to the Bleſſed Sight and Enjoyment of him. *In whoſe Preſence is fulneſs of Joy; and at whoſe Right Hand there are Pleaſures for ever more*, Pſal. 16. 11.

2. *In Heaven we ſhall have the Enjoyment of our Bleſſed Saviour*; Who loved us ſo dearly, that *for us Men, and for our Salvation, he came down from Heaven, was made Man, and by a long train of Sufferings, and at laſt a moſt painful and ignominious Death, did Reconcile us to his Father*: and

and being ascended into Heaven, and gloriously seated at the Right Hand of God, is not unmindful of us, but hath told us, he is *gone before to prepare a place for us.* And hath comfortably assured us, *he will come again and take us unto himself, that where he is, there we may be also.*

Now since the Society of Friends is the greatest Happiness, (it being the highest Satisfaction to Live and Converse with those whom we Love) we may easily apprehend, what a principal Ingredient it will be of the Joys of Heaven, to be there admitted into the Presence of our Blessed Saviour, who hath owned and encouraged his Faithful Followers with the Title of Friends. *Ye are my Friends,* and *I have called you Friends,* John 15. 14, 15.

What Raptures therefore must it raise in us, to see this best of Friends

so

ſo gloriouy Advanced! To ſee this Bleſſed Jeſus, who was ſo unworthily, nay ſo barbarouſly treated by an Ill-natured World; to behold him, I ſay, praiſed and admired, worſhipped and adored by all the Court of Heaven: By Angels and Arch-Angels, by Cherubims and Seraphims, and by the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect. Who ſhall all bear a part in that Triumphant Heavenly Song; *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Bleſſing; for thou haſt Redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred and Tongue, and People, and Nation. Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory and Power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever,* Rev. 5. 9, 12, 13.

3. *In Heaven we ſhall have Converſation*

versation with Angels and glorified Spirits. The Spirits of Just men made perfect.

And what excellent Company both these will be, we shall more sensibly apprehend, when we shall distinctly understand the nature of them both.

1. The Blessed Angels are the Inhabitants of an Invisible World, into which we are not to enter, till after Death: and therefore at present can with certainty know nothing of them, either of their *Nature* or *Employments*, without Divine Revelation.

As to their *Nature*, the utmost that is revealed to us, is this.

That they are Wise, Powerful, and Holy Spirits. That they are great Lovers of Mankind, and rejoice at the Conversion and Salvation of Sinners.

As

As to their *Offices* and *Employments*, we are indeed more fully instructed in Sacred Story. Which tells us, That the Holy Angels are the Splendid Retinue, the Royal and constant Attendants upon that great and Glorious King, whose *Throne is in the Heavens, and whose Kingdom ruleth over all. Thousands Thousands minister unto him, and Ten thousand times Ten thousand stand before him.* They stand continually before him, *to behold his Face*, expecting his Commands; and are in a constant readiness to do his Will.

The Scripture further tells us, That by the Divine Order and Appointment, these blessed Angels are *ministring Spirits* to us Men, *sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation*, Heb. 1. 14.

Hence we often read, both in the Old and New Testament, that the Wisdom of God employed his

Angels,

Angels to be the Messengers of his Will and Pleasure to Holy Men and Women. Instances are so many, I must not pretend to repeat them. They were sent to such and such Persons to Admonish and Instruct them; to Comfort and Support them; to Defend and Preserve them. And though these Blessed Angels do not now visibly appear, at least not so often as they formerly did under the Old Legal Dispensation, yet (as a Most Reverend Prelate hath made the Remark) 'There is no reason I think to doubt, 'but that God's Care extends *now* 'to *Christians* as well as it did to the '*Jews*; and that the Angels have 'as much Kindness for *Us* as they 'had for the *Jews*; and there is no 'Reason to think, that the Angels 'are *now* either Dead or Idle.

Doubtless therefore these Invisible Guardians do still Attend us;

and by the Divine Appointment do Admoniſh, Comfort, and Protect us, in many Inſtances that we know not of. But in the other World, it will be diſcovered what they have done for us, and how kind they have been to us, and how truly they loved us; and this will lay the Foundation of a perpetual Friendſhip, which will ſtill be improving in kind Offices of Love and Endearment to all Eternity.

But beſides theſe Holy Angels,

2. We ſhall have the Converſation of Glorified Spirits. *The Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect.* All the Holy Men and Women that ever lived upon the Face of the Earth. And, which may more ſenſibly affect us, we ſhall again ſee and enjoy all our dear Friends and Relations who are dead before us. And having not ſeen them of a long time, having been parted from them,

them, perhaps for many years, are you not pleaſed to think that you ſhall ſee them again? that you ſhall Converſe together, and Enjoy each other in the deareſt intimacy of Friendſhip to all Eternity?

How this Heavenly Converſation ſhall then be managed, I have already confeſs'd I cannot pretend diſtinctly to explain. The Laws and Cuſtoms of that Heavenly Country, and the Temper of its Inhabitants, are in a great meaſure concealed from us.

However, for the ſupport of our Faith and Hope, we may be permitted to make ſome general Conjectures; and, to expreſs my ſelf familiarly, whilſt we are in our Journey, we may think upon our Home, and what our Friends are doing there.

And here, we are not to doubt, but that the Converſation of the Saints in Heaven is a Rational Con-

verſation, and doth conſiſt in *Knowledge* and in *Love*. But how theſe Noble Operations will there be expreſſed, I ſhall proceed with the greateſt Caution and Modeſty to examine.

The firſt and chiefeſt, the incomparably Principal and Supreme Object of their Knowledge, is the moſt Glorious Trinity, God Bleſſed for ever. Who will then explain his Nature and his Works, in ſuch a manner, and in ſuch degrees, as finite Creatures are capable to receive. And ſince Infinite Perfections can never fully be diſcovered, known and enjoyed by finite Beings; Oh the unexpreſſible Bounty of a gracious God, who hath given us Immortal Souls, capable to live for ever; whereby we may know, love, and enjoy him to all Eternity.

But I muſt not enlarge on this ſupereminent Object of our Knowledge,

ledge, being now limited to examine;

How the Bleſſed Saints in Heaven do know each other?

Concerning which, I will preſume to ſuppoſe, that the knowledge which the Saints in Heaven have of each other, is a diſtinct and particular knowledge; that is, They do not only know in general, that thoſe Myriads of Saints, with whom they are ſurrounded, are all holy and happy like themſelves, but they have a particular knowledge of their Perſons, and what their Circumſtances, their Conditions, and Behaviour was in this lower World.

And if we may be allowed to take an eſtimate of Heavenly Converſation by this which we have on Earth, (*ſic parvis componere magna*) this is no improbable conjecture.

For Society is not pleaſing without familiar Acquaintance.

VVith what caution, uneasiness and reserve do we converse amongst Strangers? But amongst our intimate Friends, with what freedom and satisfaction do we explain our selves, and communicate our very Thoughts? Unless therefore the Saints in Glory were particularly known to each other, there would not be that intimate endearing Conversation, which the happiness of that blessed place doth allow us to suppose. Ignorance and Reserve do spoil good Company, and are the Bane of Conversation.

It hath often been enquired, whether the Saints in Heaven do know their near Relations, so as to say, This was my *Father*, this my *Mother*, this my *Husband*, this my *Wife*, this my *Child*, this my *Brother*, this my *Sister*, &c.

To which Enquiry I do with freedom make this Reply.

That

That to deny such Knowledge, according to our present apprehensions, would be a great diminution of that future Happiness.

For, are you not now passionately desirous that such your Relations should be secured from the Wrath to come, and be safely placed in Glory? And would it not put you into a Transport, to be certainly assured that they are so Happy?

Now if you are so desirous that when your dear Relations die and leave you, they may go to Heaven, what Raptures will it raise in you to find them there?

Since therefore such distinct and particular knowledge of each other, would so heighten and improve the Happiness of the Blessed, we are not in the least to doubt, but that it shall be granted to them. Nay, I am so far from denying such know-

ledge, it is my Opinion, That immediately, at our first Arrival at those Glorious Mansions, we shall not only know our near Relations, but we shall distinctly and particularly know the whole Society of the Blessed, both Saints and Angels.

O what Millions of Millions of Glorious Beings, intimately known, and familiarly acquainted, shall be there met together? But now how these Myriads of Glorifi'd Saints shall spend their Time (so we speak in this lower VVorld,) that is, what they shall do, in what they shall be imployed to all Eternity, would be very pleasing to Examine.

But, alas! we know so little of the invisible VVorld, and of the Glory that shall there be revealed, that we must be contented with very imperfect Conjectures.

And here we may be allowed, in opposition to the School-men, to declare;

clare; That the happy Converſation of the Saints in Heaven doth not conſiſt in a bare Speculation, gazing upon each other, and admiring each other's Perfections, which (as theſe fanciful Writers explain themſelves) they ſee and contemplate in the Divine Eſſence, as in a Mirror.

This is a very jejune and inſipid Notion. For doubtleſs there is Action as well as Contemplation in Heaven. Something to be done as well as enjoyed in that bleſſed place. As the *Third* Petition in the *Lord's Prayer* doth plainly inſtruct us. *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* God's Will is done by the Inhabitants of Heaven. There is Service and Obedience to be paid to God in Heaven. And this perhaps in more inſtances, and in greater variety than we are now able to imagine.

To

To understand this the better, we must observe, That Heaven is in Scripture described as a Kingdom; and consequently hath Laws and Statutes, Governors and Subjects, and those of different Ranks, Orders, and Degrees. Now if there are Laws, they must be obeyed; if Rulers and Governors, their Commands must be observed.

There are many Passages in the New Testament to support this Conjecture.

In the Parable of the Talents, as Recorded by St. *Matthew*, and of the Pounds, as by St. *Luke*, the Servant who had improved his *Five* Talents to *Ten*, and whose Pound had gained *Ten* Pounds, was very bountifully rewarded by his Lord. Which St. *Matthew* chap. 25. ver. 21. thus expresseth. *Well done, thou good and faithful Servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee*

thee Ruler over many things. But St. *Luke* chap. 19. ver. 17. words it thus, *Well, thou good Servant; becauſe thou haſt been faithful in a very little, have thou Authority over Ten Cities.*

In both theſe Evangeliſts here is expreſs mention of *Rule* and *Authority*, conferr'd and beſtow'd upon thoſe who *enter into the Joy of their Lord.* But now what this *Rule* and *Authority* do ſignifie in the other World, or what kind of Happineſs is denoted hereby, is a great Myſtery, which we know nothing of. Only this we know (as one well expreſſeth it) ‘ *That there are* ‘ *no empty Titles in Heaven, but every* ‘ *degree of Dignity there, ſignifies a* ‘ *peculiar degree of Happineſs.*

We read likewiſe in the Goſpel, of ſome to be the *leaſt*, and ſome the *greateſt* in the Kingdom of Heaven. And St. *Paul* tells us, *that as one Star differeth from another Star*

in

in Glory; so also is the Resurrection of the Dead, 1 Cor. 15. 41, 42.

All which Passages do plainly instruct us; That in that Blessed State, there is great variety of Glory and Advancement. And tho' we know very little of another World, yet we may safely entertain this Notion of the Government of Heaven, That in that happy Kingdom, under God, the Supream Lord and Sovereign, there are numberless degrees of Superiors and Inferiors, Governors and Subjects. Though all the Saints are very happy, yet they are not all equally happy, but according to their different capacities and qualifications, they are plac'd in different ranks and degrees of Glory.

Now we are not in the least to suspect, when such multitudes of active Beings are met together, that they will be Idle; but will incessantly

ſantly be employed, in mutual giving or receiving Commands from each other.

And to proceed in our Enquiry, we may further be aſſured; that ſuch their Employments will be managed without the leaſt trouble or diſturbance. Indeed in this World, here is nothing but Hurry and Tumult, Diſorder and Diſtraction; but there, in Heaven, every thing will be tranſacted with the greateſt eaſe, delight and ſatisfaction.

In that bleſſed place, every one will be pleaſed with his preſent Station: Thoſe that are *Superiors* will neither deſpiſe nor oppreſs their *Inferiors*. And thoſe that are *Inferiors*, as being placed in a lower rank of Happineſs, will not envy thoſe that are above them, but will heartily rejoice in their Advancement. And thus in all thoſe differences of Glory and Dignity between them,

the

the *Inferiors* do *Reverence* their *Superiors*, and the Superiors do *Condescend* to their Inferiors: and in so doing, they eternally converse with one another (notwithstanding all their Distances) with the greatest freedom, and most endearing familiarity.

But here we must fix, and can proceed no further. For how, or in what manner the Saints in Heaven do manage this their Conversation in particular, we are not able to discover. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.* It is sufficient for us to know in general, that our Employment, whatever it is, shall be our unspeakable Pleasure; and as much above the Noblest and most delightful Employments here on Earth, as the perfection of our Bodies, and the powers of our Souls, shall then be above what they were in this World.

Let

Let us therefore be admoniſhed to reſtrain our Curioſity, and learn our Duty.

Let us humbly beg of God to fit and prepare us for this happy Society; *to make us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; and then, as ſoon as he pleaſeth, bring us to the enjoyment of it. *Even ſo, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.*

FRom theſe Premiſes duly conſidered, I hope the Truth of my *Firſt* Propoſition will eaſily be granted, *viz. That it is very deſirable the Soul ſhould be Immortal, and that there ſhould be another Life after this.*

But againſt this my firſt Aſſertion, Men of *Atheiſtical* Principles, and Senſual Practices, do thus Reply.

Object.

Objection.

'THat it is indeed very desira-
'ble to be Happy, and to
'live in Pleasure. And the longer
'we can thus live, still the bet-
'ter. Could we but extend our
'Lives and our Enjoyments to the
'Longevity of the Patriarchs; to
'*Six*, *Seven*, *Eight*, or *Nine Hun-*
'*dred Years*; What a comfortable
'expectation would this be? But
'as Experience will not grant us
'such a happiness in this World, so
'neither will the Envy of others al-
'low it in the next. For though
'the *Right-hand* Favourites have
'Projected a fine Scheme for them-
'selves, yet they have drawn a dis-
'mal Scene for the *Left-hand* Crew.
'*Depart from me, ye Cursed, into ever-*
'*lasting Fire, prepared for the Devil*
'*and his Angels.*

This

'This they tell us is our Portion. 'Now can any Man of Sense be so 'Stupid, as to think it desirable 'thus to live for ever? To roll in 'Flames, and to be eternally Tor-'mented? Is it not therefore more 'desirable, that the Soul should be 'Mortal, and Perish with the Bo-'dy, than that it should be preser-'ved in an Immortal State, only to 'be a Monument of Eternal Ven-'geance?

Thus they Object. To which I return this

ANSWER.

THat this way of Disputing, which I have partly expressed in their own Language, is not only *Fallacious* in it self, but also of dangerous consequence to the Disputers.

1. It is Fallacious in it self. 'Tis that which Logicians call *Fallacia Accidentis.* Which I shall not explain in the usual Instances of a Logick Lecture, but shall retort upon these *Epicurean Deists*, in their own beloved Instance.

These Men do readily grant; *That to live in this World is very desirable.* And indeed they are so fond of continuing in it, that were it possible, they would never leave it.

But now were these very Men confined to a dark dismal Dungeon; there laid upon the Ground amongst Toads and Serpents, wrackt with the *Stone* or the *Gout* in Extremity: I appeal to themselves, if it is desirable thus to live in this World. Would it not be much better to die than to languish in such Misery? Therefore I conclude, in Contradiction to their Assertion, *To live in this World is not desirable.*

Let

Let them Answer this Supposition, and they have Answered themselves.

'True, say they, to live in such 'Misery and Torments is not desi- 'rable. But what then? Is it a 'good Consequence from thence to 'Argue, *That it is not desirable to live 'at all?* For we may live at Ease and 'in Pleasure; We may live to en- 'joy the Comforts and Satisfactions 'of this Life. And this we are sure 'is much to be desired. And *There- 'fore*, notwithstanding your Excep- 'tion, we do Affirm; *That to live in 'this World is very desirable.*

Now do but change the Scene from this World to the next, and the truth of my *First* Proposition is undeniably thus confirmed.

It is doubtless a very dismal Apprehension, That a poor Creature should be Eternally Tormented. And such a State is so far from be-

ing desirable, that *it is good for that Man he had not been born.* As to this wretched Person, *Judas* for Example, the Immortality of the Soul is not desirable; since he doth most passionately desire, that he might have died like the Brutes, that his Soul had died with his Body, and that both Soul and Body might have Perished Eternally.

Thus far indeed, in this sad Instance, it is not desirable that the Soul should be Immortal; that is, It is not desirable that the Soul should be Immortal, to be Immortally Tormented. And it is not desirable to go into another Word, there to live for ever in Misery.

But this is not the true and full State of the Case. For blessed be God, he hath set before us *Life* as well as *Death.* Blessed be his Infinite Goodness, there is a Heaven ready to receive us, as well as a Hell open to devour

devour us. We are capable of Everlasting Happiness, as we are liable to Eternal Misery. And if we are Miserable, it is our own Choice, and not any fatal Decree of Almighty God. Who *doth not will the death of a Sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sin and live. for God sent not his Son into the World to Condemn the World, but that the World through him might be Saved*, John 3. 17.

And therefore the Torments and Miseries to which Mankind is liable in another World, ought not in reason to be objected against the Immortality of the Soul, as if such a *capacity of living for ever* were not desirable.

For the true State of the Immortality of the Soul, and which may fully determine the Controversie, is briefly this.

Almighty God, as a rich Instance of his Bounty and Goodness, hath made the Souls of Men of an Immortal Nature, and design'd them for a perpetual duration and continuance, in another State after this Life. The which future State will be either Happy or Miserable, according to the different Tempers and Dispositions of those that live in it.

Indeed they who *have their Conversation in the Lusts of the Flesh, fulfilling the desires of the Flesh and of the Mind*, and in St. *James*'s Language, who are *Earthly, Sensual, Devilish*; they shall be confined to a Dungeon of Darkness, where they must live for ever, with the Devil and his Angels, in the most exquisite Torments.

But they who are made *Meet*, that is, who are fitted and prepared for a better place, they shall be *made par-*

partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; and shall see God, the Fountain of Light and Happiness. For when *the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, and the dead in Christ shall rise, then they shall be caught up in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air, and so shall ever be with the Lord*, 1 Thes. 4. 16, 17.

And therefore though *accidentally*, and through their own default, the Immortality of the Soul, and an Eternal duration is a Curse to some Men; yet *in it self*, and to those who follow the Divine Conduct, it is the greatest Blessing, and as such, is very desirable.

In short, It is not the *Immortality* of the Soul, but the *Misery* which attends it, and which they expect as their Portion, that these *Deists* are so much afraid of, and are so importunately pressing to Dispute into nothing.

The truth of this Observation is excellently thus confirmed by *Minutius Felix*, and *Hierocles*.

The former, in his Defence of the Resurrection against the Heathen, hath these Memorable Words. '*Nec* '*ignoro pleroſque conſcientiâ Merito-* '*rum nihil ſe eſſe poſt mortem magis* '*optare, quam credere. Malunt enim* '*extingui penitus, quam ad ſupplicia* '*reparari, Pag.* 329. I am not Ig- 'norant, that ſome Men are ſo ſen- 'ſible of what they deſerve, that 'they heartily wiſh they might be 'nothing after Death. For they 'would much rather be Annihila- 'ted, than Raiſed again to be Pu- 'niſhed. But this, ſaith he, they 'rather wiſh and deſire, than that 'they can force themſelves to be- 'lieve it.

This Observation of *Minutius Felix* is further confirmed by *Hierocles*. The Sentence is ſo large, I ſhall not

repeat

repeat it in the Original *Greek*. But his Words, as they are faithfully Tranſlated, are theſe.

'*If Conſcience awaken in a bad Man* '*a ſenſe of his evil deeds, which tortures* '*his Mind, and puts him in fear of* '*Puniſhment in Hell, his only remedy* '*is to fly to Non-entity, or Not-being.* '*So he cures one Evil with another, ſup-* '*porting his wickedneſs by the deſtructi-* '*on of his Soul. He gives Sentence* '*on himſelf, that after Death he ſhall* '*be Nothing, to fly the Penalties of fu-* '*ture Judgment. For a wicked Man* '*will not have his Soul to be Immortal,* '*that it may not ſubſiſt to ſuffer* '*Puniſhment. He anticipates his Judge,* '*by declaring it is fit that a wicked Soul* '*ſhould be reduced to nothing. But* '*as through want of Counſel he was* '*drawn to ſin, ſo through Ignorance* '*of the meaſure of things, he paſſeth* '*wrong Judgment on himſelf. For the* '*Judges of Spirits departed, framing*

their

'*their Sentence according to the Rules*
'*of Truth, do not judge it meet the Soul*
'*ſhould be Annihilated.* Vid. *Hierocl.* in *Carm. Pythag.* p. 165.

Thus far *Hierocles.* From whoſe intimation, that *they paſs a wrong Judgment upon themſelves*, I proceed to Admoniſh theſe *Deiſts*; That this *Wiſhing* and *Woulding* that the Soul were Mortal, is not only *Fallacious*, and a falſe Argument in it ſelf; But alſo,

2*ly.* It is of dangerous Conſequence to the Diſputers: Becauſe, if they do not rectify their Notion of the *Soul*'s *Mortality*, it inevitably betrays them to Eternal Ruin.

For alas! it is not their miſtaken Apprehenſion that can alter the nature of things. Things will be juſt what they are, and as God hath made them, whatever vain Men may fancy to the contrary. If therefore the Wiſdom of God hath made

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the Soul of Man Immortal, and hath given it an Eternal Duration, it is not in the Power of these Men to Destroy it, or to make it Mortal. They may indeed *kill the Body, but they are not able to kill the Soul.* The Body shall die, and be turned into dust, as is undeniably proved by daily experience, but the Soul shall still live, either in Happiness or Misery to all Eternity.

Now considering the Temper of these Men, how incapable they are of the happiness of another World, they have just reason to expect a dismal Eternity.

But this, I say, is only their own fault. For were they qualified for it, were they fitted and prepared, or in the Apostle's Language, were they *made meet*, they might then enjoy *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. Which God grant upon their true Repentance, may be their Portion. And

And thus, I hope, I have undeniably convinced these *Epicureans* and *Deists*, That it is at least *desirable* the Soul should be Immortal, and that there should be another Life after this.

I shall next endeavour to convince them, that the Immortality of the Soul is not only *Desirable*, but also,

2. *Possible.*

WE are now to examine, whether it is not *Possible* that the Soul should be Immortal, and that there should be another Life after this: And this Enquiry is of great concernment.

For on the one hand; If the Immortality of the Soul is impossible; if these *Epicures* are sure that there is no Life after this; if they have no rational expectation of a Happiness or Misery beyond this World;

Then

Then the wiſeſt thing they can do, will be to enjoy as much of this preſent World as they can.

For *if there be no Reſurrection to another Life*, the Apoſtle allows the Reaſoning of theſe Men to be very good; *Let us Eat and Drink, for to Morrow we Die.* If, I ſay, they are well aſſured, and are certain that they ſhall be utterly extinguiſhed by Death, *like the Beaſts that Periſh*, then they have nothing to take care of but their Bodies, becauſe indeed they are nothing elſe; then they need not extend their thoughts, their hopes, or fears beyond this World, and this preſent Life; becauſe they have nothing to do, but to pleaſe themſelves with preſent Enjoyments, and to live ſo with other Men, as may moſt conduce to their temporal quiet, ſecurity, and ſatisfaction.

But on the other hand; If we have Immortal Spirits which ſhall live

and

and continue for ever: And if when we leave this World, we must presently go into another, wherein we shall be unspeakably Happy, or intolerably and eternally Miserable, according as we have behaved our selves in this Life; If it be thus, as most certain it is, 'tis then highly reasonable to take care of the longest Duration; and to be more solicitous how we shall live for ever in the other World, than how we shall pass over a few days or years in this.

And therefore it is the greatest folly, which yet, God knows, is the fatal mistake of most Men; I say, it is the highest Imprudence, to employ all our care and time about these perishing Bodies, and to make Provision only for the few days of our Pilgrimage here in this Life, without any regard to that Eternal Duration which we shall have in another World. *Con-*

Consider this, O ye sensual *Deists*, *and shew your selves Men.* Act rationally, and according to the Rules of Prudence. For what Man in his Wits, for a temporal convenience and satisfaction, would forfeit an eternal benefit and advantage; and to escape a present evil, which cannot last long, would run himself upon one infinitely greater, and which will last for ever?

Consider therefore what a dismal hazard you run, and what a foolish Scheme you have drawn, to Govern your selves by.

If your Souls are Mortal, and die with your Bodies, as you Wish, Fancy, and Dispute, then So. There is an end of all your Pleasures. This is the best of your Case; and the only happiness you can expect is, *To be turned into Nothing.*

But if when your eyes are closed in this World, you then find your

your ſelves removed into another; into that inviſible World Inhabited by Spirits, which you in your Frolicks have not only Diſputed but Burleſqu'd and Ridicul'd? Oh! what Surprize will then ſeize you? How effectually will you then be convinced, to your infinite trouble and confuſion, that there is a God, and another Life after this, and a terrible Puniſhment to the Workers of Iniquity.

From theſe Premiſes I do thus faithfully Admoniſh you;

That nothing but the utter Impoſſibility of a future State can juſtify your Conduct. And therefore nothing leſs than a demonſtration of the *Impoſſibility* of the thing; of your having immortal Souls that ſhall ſurvive your Bodies, and ſubſiſt apart from them, and be extremely Miſerable, or Happy in another World; I ſay, nothing but a

De-

demonſtration of the *Impoſſibility* of this, ought to ſatisfy your Minds, in a Caſe of ſo great danger, and upon which ſo much doth depend.

Let us therefore now impartially Examine; *Whether it is impoſſible that the Soul ſhould be Immortal, and that there ſhould be another Life after this?*

Now a thing is ſaid to be ſtrictly and properly Impoſſible, not only which is difficult, and which *may* never be, as to the event, but which *can* never be, in the nature of the thing: That is, when it is a contradiction to the ſuppoſed nature of the thing, that it ſhould be ſo, or ſo, then we truly affirm, That it is Impoſſible.

That the Notion of the Soul's Immortality is difficult, I readily acknowledge, (and therefore we are not to wonder that the beſt and wiſeſt of the Heathen Moraliſts,

ſuch as *Cicero*, *Seneca*, *Marcus Antoninus*, &c. did ſometimes talk very uncertainly about it); but all the Reaſon of Mankind, nay, all the Wit, Scepticiſm, and Sophiſtry together, can find no repugnancy and contradiction in it.

'Tis obſerved by a very Learned Man, That thoſe who doubted moſt of the Soul's Immortality, yet confeſſed that there was nothing like a Demonſtration againſt it. And thoſe who took a Pride in oppoſing the common Senſe of Mankind about theſe matters, yet never pretended to Evidence or Demonſtration on their ſide.

If therefore our Modern Scepticks, who talk ſo much of Reaſon and Demonſtration, will at laſt pretend, that the Immortality of the Soul is impoſſible, then let them prove it.

But

But the Attempt is so extravagant, that I cannot imagine what *Medium* they will fix upon for such a Proof, unless they will pretend *the Identity of Soul and Body.* For it must be acknowledged, that if the Soul is the same with the Body; if the Soul is not a Substance really distinct from the Body, but only the more pure and refined part of Matter; Or if, as they phrase it, the Soul is nothing else but a certain disposition and modification of the Body; *Then* indeed it cannot subsist when separated from the Body; then there is an absolute incapacity in the Soul of subsisting after Death: then when the Body dies, the Soul must die likewise. And consequently, since it implies a Contradiction, that the same Being should live, and not live at the same time, on supposition that the Soul and Body are the same Substance, the Immortality of

the Soul doth imply a Contradiction, and therefore is Impossible.

But now, if upon examination it do appear, that the Soul is a Substance different, and distinct from the Body; then it is possible to be separated from the Body; then it may live and subsist without the Body, and consequently it is Possible that the Soul is Immortal.

I am therefore to prove, That the Soul is not the same with the Body, but that it is a Substance different and distinct from the Body.

And here I demand of these *Deists*, who are very severe Exactors, What kind of Proof do they expect? Do they require we should prove such distinction by Ocular Demonstration? that we should *Digito Monstrare*, point at them with the Finger, and say, here is the One, and there is the Other; here is the Soul,

Soul, and there is the Body? Do they fancy we ſhould prove them to be different in Place? As Sceptical as they are, I cannot ſuppoſe them to be ſo abſurd. And therefore this Controverſie is not to be determined by our outward Senſes, but by Reaſon, and the juſt conſequences of Things.

And I hope it will be accepted as a very fair Proof, if I can Evidence, That the Pleaſure and Pain of the Soul is different and diſtinct from the Pleaſure and Pain of the Body.

If the Soul can be in Pleaſure when the Body is in Pain, and if the Soul can be in Pain when the Body doth enjoy its Pleaſures, Then ſince Pleaſure and Pain are two different diſtinct Affections, which require different Subjects, it evidently follows, That if the Soul and Body are mutually in Pleaſure and

Pain at the same time, that then the Soul and Body are two different distinct Beings.

That the Soul may be in Pleasure when the Body is in Pain, is undeniably thus confirmed.

There is not a more pungent Pain than to be burning in Fire; and yet we read of some dying Martyrs, who have expressed such Pleasure, that they have sung for joy in the midst of the Flames. And of one particularly, who thus cry'd out: *I feel no more Pain in this Fire, than if I were in a Bed of Down; but it is to me as sweet as a Bed of Roses.*

Now what possible account can be given of such Transport of Joy, under the most exquisite Torments of their Bodies, if their Minds were not of a far Nobler and Diviner Nature than their Bodies?

From

From these and such like Instances 'tis undeniably inferr'd, That there is something within us capable of Pleasure, distinct from the Body; and that the Pleasures of it may be so great, as to swallow up the Pains of the Body.

There is therefore a Spiritual and Immortal Being within us, not only distinct from the Body, but very far superior to it. And consequently, since the Soul is a Being different and distinct from the Body, it is possible to be separated from the Body, and to live and subsist without the Body.

Several other Arguments might be added to confirm this Truth. But they will more pertinently and methodically be consider'd under my next Topick; for that which is *Probable* must needs be *Possible*. When therefore I shall have proved that it is *Probable*, That the Soul is Im-

mortal, I shall then *ex abundanti* have confirmed that it is *Possible*.

I am therefore next to examine, whether the Immortality of the Soul is not,

3. *Probable?*

NOW a thing is said to be *Probable* which hath the Appearance of Truth. Where the Arguments are such, and so many, as may induce the Mind to believe such a thing rather than the contrary, we properly say, it is *Probable*, or it is likely so to be.

When therefore we affirm the *Immortality* of the Soul is *Probable*, we denote this;

That though we have not yet proved it to be *Certain* (we are not yet come so far; we cannot say, nor prove all at once); yet at present it so far hath the appearance of Truth, that

that ſome plauſible Reaſons may be given for it.

And theſe Reaſons ſhall be drawn 1. From the Nature of *God*. 2. From the Nature of *Man*.

1. The Nature or Eſſence of God being Infinite and Incomprehenſible, cannot otherwiſe be known than by his Works, (I now ſpeak to thoſe who reject all Revelation, and deny the Authority of the Holy Scriptures.) By obſerving what he hath *done*, we make ſome faint Conjectures what he *is*.

Now the Works of God are either *Creation* or *Providence*. And a due Conſideration of both theſe may convince us, That it is at leaſt *Probable*, that *the Soul is Immortal*, and that *there is another Life after this*.

1. *Creation*.

1. *Creation.*

THE Wisdom of God is wonderfully discovered in the Creation of this visible World, this Globe of Earth which we Inhabit. There is a *Scala Naturæ*, which to a considering Mind is very Surprizing. *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! in Wisdom hast thou made them all: the Earth is full of thy Riches*, Psal. 104. 24.

'Tis very admirable to observe the different kinds and degrees of Beings.

To begin with the lowest, *viz.* *Inanimate* Beings.

The several sorts of *Earths*, *Fossiles*, and *Minerals*, are so many, and of such different Shapes, Figures and Perfections, that the greatest Naturalists are puzled to explain 'em.

Let

Let us next proceed to *Animate* Beings. Of which there are *Three* distinct Specifick Natures. The *Vegetable*, the *Sensitive*, and the *Rational*.

1. Let us survey the *Vegetable Order*. And here who can enumerate all the various Species of Beings contained within that Sphere? It hath been the Work of Ages to compose an Herbal: Every succeeding Age having added something to the Labours of the former; but still leaving the Work to be finished by future Generations.

2. Let us next consider the *Sensitive*, or Animal Nature. Which is *Twofold*.

1. The *Imperfect*, called *Insects*.

2. The more *Perfect*. Distinguished into *Birds*, *Beasts*, and *Fishes*.

1. The Imperfect sort of Animals called *Insects*, which seem so contemptible, and are so generally neg-

neglected as to be trod under Foot, are of wonderful Contexture; and are such Instances of the Divine Wisdom, as to awaken a considering Mind into a just Admiration of them. And therefore our Inquisitive Men, who have spent some time in examining their Nature, should be treated with Respect; and not so unworthily Ridicul'd for those Discoveries, which the Dulness, or Laziness of others were never able to make.

2. The more *Perfect* Animals are distinguished into *Birds*, *Beasts* and *Fishes*. The Kinds of which are so various, and their Nature so admirable, that though former Ages have attempted to enumerate and explain them, yet the Work is still imperfect, and is left to be improved by succeeding Posterity.

Now since God hath so Richly furnished this Globe of Earth, the

lowest

loweſt and meaneſt part of the Univerſe, with ſuch Variety of viſible Creatures, is it not at leaſt *Probable*, that thoſe vaſt immenſe Tracts of pure *Æther*, in which the Planets and fixed Stars are placed, ſhould be likewiſe furniſhed with ſuitable Inhabitants? As this lower viſible World is fill'd with Bodies and Corporeal Beings; may we not ſuppoſe, that thoſe higher Regions are inhabited with Spirits? For ſince God is a pure Spirit and Omnipotent, we have no reaſon to doubt, but that he *could* make Creatures of a Spiritual Nature, and ſuch as have no Principle of Self-corruption in them.

The Wiſdom and Power of God do convince us, that this is *Poſſible*; That God *can* do this if he thinks fit; and that he *hath* done it: that he hath made ſuch Spiritual and Immortal Beings, is highly *Probable* from his Goodneſs. For it is the very

Nature

Nature of Goodneſs to communicate and diffuſe it ſelf, and to delight in ſo doing. And that this Goodneſs is eminently in God, the Pſalmiſt plainly tells us, *Thou art good, and thou doeſt good*, Pſal. 119. 68. Being thus good in himſelf, he is thereby inclined to communicate his Goodneſs to others. And ſince this Goodneſs did prompt him to Make and Create ſuch variety of Corporeal Beings of a lower Rank and Capacity, why may we not be allowed to ſuppoſe, That he, who is a Spirit of Infinite Perfections, hath likewiſe made Spirits as well as Bodies; Rational Beings as well as Senſitive; and as to their continuance, not periſhing like the Brutes, but of an Immortal Nature and Duration?

Now ſince we have no other way to know the Nature and Eſſences of Things, but by their Operations

rations and Effects; and since Man is conscious to himself of such Noble Operations of Reason and Judgment, which we could never yet discover to be in Brutes, we thence infer, and are inclined to think, That Man hath a Principle within him of a Spiritual Immortal Nature; and that we were not made only to grovel on this Earth, but that we are to remove into another and better World.

But the Immortality of the Soul is *Probable*, not only from *Creation*, (because God, who is an Omnipotent Spirit can, if he please, Make and Create an Immortal Soul); but also from,

2. *Providence.*

AS God made the World by his *Power*, so he Governs it by his *Providence*. And that he Governs

verns the whole Creation with the greateſt Equity and Juſtice, is ſo fully acknowledged by the Heathens as well as Chriſtians, that it needs no Proof. Now the Juſtice of Government doth conſiſt in the Equality of Diſtribution, in proportioning Rewards and Puniſhments to good and bad Men according to their Actions; or in Scripture Phraſe, *in rendring to every Man according to his Works.*

We have this Natural Notion of God; That being Infinitely Holy, Juſt, and Righteous in himſelf, he hath a great love and kindneſs for good and holy Men: and conſequently, that he takes particular care of them, will preſerve them from Evil, will do them good, and make them happy.

On the other hand, 'tis as natural to infer; That a Righteous and Holy God hateth Iniquity, doth loathe and abhor all Sin and Wickedneſs;

ednefs, and will difown and punifh all the Workers of it.

If we do acknowledge God to be Juft, we muft fuppofe fuch Proceedings; and are not to doubt but that *Good Men fhall be Happy*, and *Wicked Men fhall be Miferable.*

But now if thefe Diftributions are to be confidered with refpect to this Life only; and if neither Rewards nor Punifhments are to be expected in another World; there are then many Inftances of God's Providence, wherein it would be impoffible to defend his Juftice.

How many Pious Perfons have entirely devoted themfelves to God's Service, and have lived in a conftant exercife of that great Duty of Self-denial; who have not only Sacrificed their Lufts, but even their Lives and their Eftates to him? And yet fuppofing there is no Life after this, have received no other Reward

for so doing, but Poverty and Reproaches, Misery and Contempt, whilst they live, and at last a violent and tormenting Death.

On the other hand; How many Millions of wicked Men have lived in open defiance to all that is Sacred? Have Blasphemed the Name of God, Affronted his Authority, and Contemned his Laws: and yet supposing no other Life after this, have undergone no other Punishment, but to live prosperously, and die quietly in the midst of their Friends, and with the applauses and commendations of all that surround them.

The matter of Fact is undeniable, and not to be disputed; daily experience confirms this Truth; *That many pious good Men are very miserable; and many wicked profligate Sinners are very prosperous in this Life.*

But

But now how to reconcile such Proceedings with the Justice of God, hath been one of those Enquiries, which in all Ages of the World, the minds of Men have been much perplex'd about.

The Heathen Moralists, who had no other Guide than the Light of Reason, have said many useful things on this Subject. And till the Sceptical Atheist can be convinced of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, I can only desire him to peruse the Writings of the Heathen. And more particularly, two very excellent Discourses of *Seneca* and *Plutarch*.

The *First* is that noted Tract, *Cur Bonis male sit, cum sit Providentia.* The *Other* is that Admirable Discourse of *Plutarch*; *De his qui sero puniuntur a Numine.*

I shall no farther, at present, take notice of their Arguments, than as

they refer to another World. Which *Plutarch* moſt expreſly thus enforceth. Ἀγωνίζεται γὰρ ὥσπερ ἀθλητὴς, &c. *This preſent Life is the place of the Soul's Combat, which when it hath finiſhed, it then receives according to its Performance of it.* Οὔσης δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς, &c. *And ſince the Soul doth ſubſiſt after Death, it ſtands to the greateſt Reaſon, that it ſhould there receive either Reward or Puniſhment.* Which is a full Proof of his former Determination, Εἷς ἐστι λόγος, &c. *The ſame Reaſon which confirms Providence, doth likewiſe confirm the Immortality of the Soul; and if one be taken away, the other follows.* Vid. *Plutarch* Morals, Pag. 560. *Edit. Francof. Aubr.*

From whence we may apprehend, that *Plutarch*'s Argument is this.

God ſpares wicked Men in this Life, becauſe the time is not yet come

come wherein he intends to Punish them.

Indeed the Holy Scriptures do best vindicate the Justice of God; and have given us the most clear and full Account of his Providence. But yet the Heathens themselves, from mere Natural Reason, have had such a Persuasion of God's Justice, that they have given this as a great Reason why God did forbear to Punish wicked Men here in this World, Because he did reserve them for future Punishment in the next.

So that the Belief of another World gives a general Answer to all the difficulties of Providence in this. And in particular, to the Calamities of good Men, and the Prosperity of the Wicked.

And therefore, since the Dispensations of God's Providence in this World, towards Good and Bad

Men, are many times very promiſcuous; nay, very croſs and contrary to what might be expected from the Wiſe and Juſt Sovereign of the World; ſince many times it is the Lot of good Men, to Suffer and be Afflicted; and of wicked Men to live in a Flouriſhing and Proſperous Condition: I ſay, Things being thus, I appeal to the ſober Thoughts of the greateſt Sceptick; If it is not highly *Probable*, That there is another Life after this; and that there ſhall be a Day of Recompence; a ſolemn and publick diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments in another World. And that then the Juſtice of Divine Providence, which is now ſo Arrogantly diſputed, ſhall be viſible to Angels and Men, *in rendring to every Man according to his Works.* But,

2. A due Consideration of the Nature of *Man* may convince us, That it is very *Probable* the Soul is Immortal, and that there is another Life after this.

That this may appear, we shall consider, 1. *The Inclination of Man's Nature.* 2. *The Perfection of Man's Nature.*

1. *The Inclination of our Nature.*

THE Immortality of the Soul is a natural Dictate of our Minds. That is, we are naturally inclin'd to believe and acknowledge the Immortality of the Soul.

That Men do now generally believe the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State, and have so believed in all Ages, the present Experience of the World, and the Records of former Times, do abundantly Testify.

The Testimonies of the *Ancient* Heathen are so many and so noted, it would make a Volume to repeat them: and therefore I will not trouble my self or Reader, to transcribe such Passages; but shall only mention Two. The First is that known Saying of *Tully*: *Permanere animos arbitramur, consensu Nationum omnium.* Tusc. lib. 1. 'We do 'Believe that the Souls of Men do 'abide after Death, by the Consent 'of all Nations.

The other is that noted Passage of *Seneca*. *Cum de animarum æternitate disserimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum, aut timentium inferos, aut colentium.* Epist. 117. 'When we Dispute about 'the Immortality of the Soul, the 'General Consent of Men, either 'Fearing or Worshipping the Infer- 'nal Powers, is of no small moment 'with us.

As

As to the *Moderns*, I might be very large in reciting the Travels of Voyagers into all Parts of the World. Who having Examined their Cuſtoms, their Manners, and Religions, do inform us; That the Generality even of the moſt Barbarous Nations, did Believe *the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State.*

Now how comes this Perſuaſion to have gained ſo univerſal a poſſeſſion of the Mind of Man, and to have found ſuch general entertainment in all *Nations*, even thoſe that are moſt *Barbarous*? If there be no ſuch Place as another World, no ſuch State as another Life after this, how comes it to paſs that the apprehenſion of it is ſo univerſal, that no differences of *Age*, or *Temper*, or *Education*, can wear it out, and ſet any conſiderable number of Men free from it? If it is an Error, how

come

come all Nations to be thus seduced? Into what can we resolve this strong Inclination of Mankind to this Error and Mistake? It is altogether unimaginable, but that the Reason of so universal a Consent in all Places and Ages of the World, and among all differences of Persons, should be *one* and the *same*. But no *one* and *constant* Reason of this can be given, but from the Frame and Nature of Man's Mind, which hath this Notion of the *Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State*, Stampt and Impreſt upon it by the Author of its Being. Who being Infinitely Just, and Infinitely Wise, is neither capable of Deceiving or being Deceived.

This seems to be a credible and satisfactory Account, of so Universal a Consent in this Matter. From whence I conclude in the Words of *Tully*:

Quod

Quod si omnium consensus, naturæ vox est: omnesque qui ubique sunt consentiunt esse aliquid, quod ad eos pertineat, qui è vitâ cesserunt: nobis quoque idem existimandum est. 'Since 'all Men in the World, in all Ages, 'and in all Places, have believed 'the *Immortality of the Soul*, and a '*Future State*, We likewise are thence 'inclined, with great probability, 'to believe the same.

If here the Scepticks shall pretend, that the matter of Fact is not true. And that upon the late Discoveries, whole Nations have been found without any Sense of God or Religion, or the least Apprehension of the Immortality of the Soul, or a Future State; To this I Answer,

1. Supposing, but not Granting, that some Savage People (as for Instance the *Caffres* or *Hottentots*, at the *Cape of Good-Hope*, and the *Caribbians*, or the Inhabitants of the

Caribbee-

Caribbee-Islands), I say, supposing that these did appear so dull and brutish to their first Discoveries, as to have no Sense of God or Religion, nor any apprehension of a future State; What then? Is this any Argument, That the Immortality of the Soul is not a Natural Dictate? For these, and the like Savages are no other than Monsters in Nature: And it is a known Observation; That no Argument can be drawn *a Monstro ad Naturam.* A thing may be Natural, and yet some Instances may be brought to the contrary. But,

2. Those who have more strictly examined the manner of Life of these Savages, do inform us; That even the most Barbarous have some Religion amongst them. Particularly Monsr. *Rochfort* (Hist. *de Caribb.* l. 4. c. 12.) and *F. du Tertre*, (Hist. Nat. *de Antilles*, Par. 2. §. 3.)

who

who were converſant amongſt the *Caribbians*, do both agree; That they have ſome knowledge of *one Supreme God in Heaven*, who is of *Infinite Goodneſs, and hurts no Body*: And that *they believe the Immortality of the Soul.* And the like might be affirmed of other Savages.

But to proceed, It appears very *Probable*, That the Soul is Immortal, and that there ſhall be another Life after this, not only from the Inclination of our Nature, but alſo from,

2. *The Perfection of our Nature.*

THat there is a *Scala Naturæ*, and that Natural Beings are of different Degrees and Perfections, and that Man is the moſt Perfect, and moſt Happy of Sublunary Creatures, is ſo generally acknowledged, that it never yet was

ſeri-

ferioufly Difputed by the greateft Sceptick. *Lord! what is Man that thou art mindful of him? For thou haft made him a little lower than the Angels, and crowned him with Glory and Honour*, Pfal. 8. 4, 5.

But how this fhould be true, unleſs the Soul of Man is Immortal, and unleſs there is another Life after this, would puzzle you to reſolve me.

If there is no other Life but what we enjoy in this World, and if there are no other Pleaſures but the Senſual Satisfactions of the Body, *Then* thoſe Creatures muſt be granted to be moſt Happy, which have the largeſt enjoyment of thoſe Senſual Pleaſures. And ſhould the Compariſon be ſtrictly made, it would plainly appear, that Brutes have the advantage of Rational Beings. For,

1. *It is observed, that several Brute Creatures do outlive Mankind, and continue much longer in the World than he.* The Constitutions of their Bodies, their *Stamina Vitæ*, are more firm and robust, and consequently, they are more strong and healthy, not so liable to be snatch'd away by Sickness and Diseases, as Man is.

2. *The Brute Creatures do seem generally to have a quicker Sense of Pleasure, as well as a longer Enjoyment of it.* And of this our exhausted Leachers have been observed to complain, as a great defect in themselves, but a priviledge in the Brutes, and do much envy them for it.

3. *The Brutes have a more free and unlimited Enjoyment.*

They have no Fears and Jealousies from *this* or *that*, to abate their Desires, and damp their Pleasures. They are neither controul'd with the Checks of Conscience, nor

disturb'd

disturb'd with the apprehension of an After-reckoning; but do freely, and without interruption, enjoy the dictates of their natural Inclinations.

We have indeed a Noble Faculty in us, our Reason, which we highly value as our Crown and Glory, and do justly call it the perfection of our Nature. But were there no future State, this admired Faculty would be so far from being our Perfection, that it would be vain and vexing.

For were there no other Happiness to be enjoyed but the sensual Pleasures of the Body, no other satisfaction but to eat, and drink, and sleep, and propagate our Kind; were this the whole of our expectation, our Reason then would be wholly useless; since the Senses and Appetites we have in common with Brutes, would be sufficient for such Enjoyments.

Nay

Nay further; If there is nothing to be enjoyed by us, but what is *Carnal* and *Senſual*, our Reaſon would be ſo far from being our Ornament and Perfection, that it would only be the Plague and Torment of our Nature.

For nothing is more irkſome than Diſappointments. And therefore to have the Deſire and Expectation of a future State implanted in our Nature, without Poſſibility to obtain it, would render us more wretched and deſpicable than the Brutes. For the Brutes do never vex themſelves with fruitleſs expectations, nor weary themſelves with vain purſuits, nor torment themſelves with the fears of a diſappointment, but take their Pleaſures when their Appetites crave them, and they are freely offer'd to them.

In all which, and many other reſpects, were there no other Life

after this, we ſhould have great cauſe to envy their happineſs; and might juſtly affirm concerning Mankind, as St. *Paul* did of Chriſtians. *If in this Life only we have hope in Chriſt, we* Chriſtians *are of all Men moſt miſerable*, 1 Cor. 15.19. So, *If in this Life only we have hope*, Mankind *is of all* Creatures *moſt miſerable.*

You cannot therefore have ſuch ſhallow apprehenſions of God, as to think that ſuch Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs, ſhould ſo ill contrive his Creation, as that the Nobleſt Being ſhould be finally the moſt unhappy.

Is it not therefore at leaſt highly *Probable*, That there is another Life after this; That better things are prepared for us in another World; and that the Soul is of an Immortal Nature, and thereby is made capable for ever to enjoy them?

But this is not only *Probable*, but Bleſſed be God, it is,

4. *Certain.*

4. *Certain.*

TO prove that the *Immortality* of the Soul is *Probable*, is to give ſome Reaſons for it; but to prove that it is *Certain*, is to give ſuch Reaſons as are firm and valid. And that the following Reaſons may appear to be ſuch, I muſt Premiſe; *That there are different degrees of Certainty.* For all Truths are not equally evident, nor are capable of the ſame manner of Proof.

The higheſt degree of Certainty, and the greateſt Evidence that can be pretended, is our own Senſe and Experience.

We commonly ſay, *Seeing is Believing*; that is, This is the beſt Argument for the Truth of any thing, that we our ſelves do ſee it. And the Experience which doth ariſe from our Senſes, hath ſuch Force and Con-

viction, that no pretence of Reaſon to the contrary can ever be regarded. We are certain that *Snow is white*, and that *Fire is hot*: Becauſe we ſee the one, and feel the other. And ſhould the greateſt Sceptick pretend to prove that they are not, we ſhould take little notice of his Arguments. For Men will truſt their own Senſes and Experience, againſt any ſubtilty of Reaſon whatſoever.

Now thus far I do readily grant; That with this kind of Certainty, whilſt we are in this World, we cannot pretend to be *certain* that the Soul is Immortal; or that there is another Life after this. For the Soul being a pure Spirit, cannot be the Object of any Corporeal Senſe, nor muſt we pretend to any ſenſible Evidence of a future State, becauſe Senſe is only of things preſent.

But thoſe who are actually removed into another World, they are unde-

undeniably certain, and are evidently convinced of the Truth of these things; and cannot possibly, if they would, have the least doubt of the Reality of them.

Those blessed Souls, who now live in the reviving Presence of God; and are possess'd of those unspeakable Joys which we cannot now conceive; They who *see God face to face*, are undeniably *Certain* from their own Experience, that there is a Happiness in another World, and that their Souls are Immortal, for ever to enjoy it.

And those wretched and miserable Spirits, who feel the Vengeance of God, and are plunged into the horrors of eternal Darkness; who lie groaning under his Wrath, and the severity of his Justice; they cannot now possibly doubt of that, which they have so sceptically disputed in this World: but do now

believe upon irresistible Evidence, and are undeniably convinced of the Reality of that State, and the insupportable Misery of it.

When therefore our Scepticks do demand, that we should prove the Certainty of a Future State; do they expect that we should make this evident to their Senses? That Heaven should be open, and the Glories of it visible to their Mortal Eyes? And that Hell should be uncovered, and that they should see the Flames, and hear the Shrieks and Howlings of the Damned?

Is this the Evidence they expect? Will nothing less than this convince them?

If so, we must freely confess, that as our present State will not admit it, so if it would, it is not reasonable we should have it. Because such violent irresistible Evidence would very much lessen, if

not

not quite destroy the Virtue of Obedience. For it is scarce to be imagined, that any Man who had seen the Glories of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell, should ever after be tempted to do any thing that would deprive him of that Happiness, or bring him to that Misery. Thus far, I say, I must needs grant to these Scepticks; we cannot be certain of the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State.

But then we are to admonish them, that besides This Certainty of Sense and Experience, there is another degree of Certainty which is called the *Certainty* of *Faith*. Which tho' not so evident and convincing as the former, yet is the utmost we can pretend to in this Life. *For*, here in this World, *we walk by Faith, not by sight*, 2 Cor. 5. 7.

This therefore is that which I am to explain and confirm.

Faith is the evidence of things not seen, Heb. 11. 1. That is, Things that are inviſible, either in their own nature, or as future, are not evident to our Senſes, but are only known and diſcerned by Faith. I ſay, the only Evidence we can expect of the Truth of ſuch things, of their Reality or their Nature, is Faith. For however certain they may be *in themſelves*, yet *to us*, they are only certain by Faith.

Now *Faith*, in the general Notion of it, *is a Perſwaſion of the Mind concerning any thing.* Let the Inſtance of that Perſwaſion be what it will. Whether it be *concerning the Truth of any Propoſition*; or concerning the *Exiſtence*, or *Futurition*, or *Lawfulneſs*, or *Convenience*, or *Poſſibility*, or *Goodneſs* of any Thing, or the Contrary: Such Perſwaſion is called Faith.

But

But here we must Observe; That this is only the Vulgar and Popular, but not the strict and Philosophical Notion of Faith. For when we discourse with those who pretend to be critical and exact, and who expect it from us that we should speak properly, then we must distinguish this general Perswasion or Assent, from other Acts of the Understanding. And then Faith is properly this:

Faith *is a giving Credit to a thing*, or *taking it to be true, upon the Testimony or Authority of such Persons as declare it.* And herein it differs from other kinds of *Assent*; because in them we Believe upon the Evidence and apparent Reason of the things themselves. For when things are apparent of themselves, either in respect of our Sense, (as *that Snow is white*, and *Fire is hot*) or in respect of our Understanding, (as *that the whole*

whole of any thing is greater than any one part of the whole); I say, when things are thus evident, then the Assent which we give, is called *Knowledge*, but not *Faith*.

But when any thing propounded to us, is neither apparent to our Sense, nor evident to our Understanding, in and of it self; and yet appeareth to us to be true, by virtue of some Testimony given to it, this Assent is properly called Faith.

And this is the only Certainty we now can have of the *Immortality of the Soul*, and a *future State*.

We are firmly perswaded, *That the Soul is Immortal*, and that *We shall live for ever in another World*, because these Truths are Divinely Revealed, that is, they are testified and declared by an All-knowing, and most Just and Faithful God, who can neither Deceive nor be Deceived; and therefore though these things

things are not as yet evident to us, we now firmly believe them.

If here the Sceptick ſhall Demand; How are we certain that God hath thus declared? Where hath he told us, that the Soul is Immortal, and that after Death we ſhall be Raiſed again, and ſhall live for ever in another World?

To this we directly Anſwer;

That theſe Truths are revealed in the Holy Scripture; but more eſpecially in that Part of it, which is called the *New Teſtament*, or the *Goſpel.*

St. *Paul* tells us expreſly, that the clear and certain diſcovery of a future State, is owing to the Chriſtian Religion, and *made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; who hath aboliſhed Death, and brought Life and Immortality to light through the Goſpel*, 2 Tim. 1. 10.

This

This Phraſe of *bringing Immortality to Light*, is not to be underſtood *Abſolutely*, as if it were wholly a new Diſcovery, which the World had no apprehenſion of before, (for not only *Jews*, by Revelation, but alſo *Heathens*, by the Light of Nature, as I have already ſhewed, had ſome probable Conjectures and Hopes concerning another Life after this, and were in ſome meaſure perſwaded, that when Men died they were not wholly extinguiſhed, but did paſs into another World, and did there receive Rewards or Puniſhments according to their Behaviour in this Life): I ſay, this Expreſſion is not *Abſolute*, but *Comparative*. And the meaning of it is this. *Life and Immortality is brought to Light by the Goſpel*; that is, By the coming of Chriſt into the World, Immortal Life is incomparably more evident and manifeſt than it was before.

As

As to the *Heathen*. The Common People, who followed the Byas and Inclination of their Nature, and had not their Understandings perplexed with Niceties and Objections, as the Philosophers had, they were generally inclined to believe the Soul's Immortality, and a future State. But the Philosophers had Wrangled and Disputed the Matter into so much Uncertainty, (some stiffly denying, others wavering and doubting) that those who were most inclined to believe these Truths, did rather express their desires and hopes, than their full assurance concerning them.

And 'tis observable (which may seasonably be applied to our Modern Scepticks), that while these Disputes were managed among the Philosophers of Old, though those who asserted the Immortality of the Soul, had the better Reason of their side,

ſide, yet their Adverſaries ſpake with greater Confidence and Aſſurance. And that always bears the greateſt Sway among weak and injudicious People.

As to the *Jews*. They had indeed ſome further Knowledge than the *Heathen*. They had not only the Light of Reaſon, but alſo of Revelation. But then that Revelation was very imperfect. For the diſcoveries of a future State, under the old Legal Diſpenſation, were dark and obſcure; and uſually repreſented under Types and Figures. As of a long Life here upon Earth, and a Land flowing with Milk and Honey. And though the wiſer ſort of the *Jews* did ſee thorough the Vail (as is plainly affirmed of thoſe Worthies, *Heb.* 11.) yet the generality of them had ſlender apprehenſions of this Truth.

But

But in the Gospel we find the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State, not barely asserted, nor proved by uncertain Arguments, nor depending on the Opinion of Philosophers, nor shadow'd and obscured with Types and Figures, but delivered with the greatest Authority, revealed with the clearest Light, and confirmed with the strongest Evidence.

For our Blessed Saviour, (who was sent down from Heaven by his Father to instruct us) hath not only *declared* the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State; but hath also given us a sensible *Demonstration* of these Truths, in his Resurrection from the Dead, and his visible Ascension into Heaven.

Of both these I shall treat distinctly.

1. Our Blessed Saviour hath *declared*, that the Soul is Immortal, and

and that there is another Life after this

And becauſe ſome who acknowlegde a future State, deny the Immortality of the Soul, I ſhall ſhew,

1. That our Bleſſed Saviour hath declared in his Goſpel, that the Soul is Immortal.

This I ſhall prove from *Matth.* 10. 28. Compared with *Luke* 12. 4, 5.

Matth. 10. 28.	Luke 12. 4, 5.
And fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul: But rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell.	*And I ſay unto you, my Friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear; Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into Hell; yea, I ſay unto you, fear him.*

The Senſe of which two Places I ſhall expreſs in this Paraphraſe.

Behold, I ſend you forth as Sheep in the midſt of Wolves; and ye ſhall be hated

hated of all Men for my Names ſake; But *I ſay unto you, my Friends, Be not afraid of them that* can only *kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do*: for they *are not able to kill the Soul. But I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear: Fear him which after he hath killed* the Body, and taken away your Temporal Life, *hath* a further *Power to caſt into Hell*; and there *is able to deſtroy*, that is, Puniſh and Torment, *both Soul and Body* in that diſmal Place, *where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.*

This is the plain Senſe of theſe two Places of Scripture.

From whence I obſerve, in the Words of the Learned Dr. *Whitby*, in his Comment on *Matth.* 10. 28.

'These Words ſeem to contain 'a certain Evidence, That the Soul 'dies not with the Body, but con-'tinues afterward in a State of Senſi-'bility. For, 'I. That

'1. That which it is allowed that 'Men can do to the Body, it is de-'nied that that they can do to the 'Soul. Therefore Christ speaks 'not in these Words of Death E-'ternal, (for that kind of Death 'Men cannot inflict upon the Bo-'dy, or hinder its Resurrection); 'therefore it is spoken of a Tem-'poral Death.

'Note 2*dly*. That they who by 'killing the Body make the Soul 'also to Perish, till the Re-union 'and Revivíscence both of Soul 'and Body, do also kill the Soul; 'and so do more than they who 'can kill the Body only. And they 'who by killing of the Body, render 'the Soul or Spirit of a Man Insen-'sate, and deprived of all possibility 'of thinking, or perceiving any 'thing, do also kill the Soul. For 'tis not easy to perceive, how an 'Intelligible, Thinking, and Per-

'ceiving

'ceiving Being, can be more (or 'indeed otherwise) killed, than by 'depriving it of all Sensation, 'Thought, and Perception. The 'Body it self being killed, by a to-'tal Privation of its Capacity of 'Sense and Motion.

'Since therefore in St. *Luke*, Ch. '12. 4. Christ saith, The Adversa-'ries of the Christians *can only kill* '*their Bodies*; and here, that they '*cannot kill their Souls*; it remains, '*That the Soul doth not Perish with* '*the Body, nor is it reduced into an* '*Insensible State by the Death of it.* Thus that Judicious Commentator.

And that the Soul doth not *Sleep* with the Body, as some Phrase it, (which is a most absurd Unphiloso-phical Opinion) is undeniably pro-ved from *Phil.* 1. 21, 22, &c. Ver. 21. *For to me to Live is Christ, and to Die is Gain.*

22. *But if I live in the Flesh, this is the Fruit of my Labour: yet what I shall chuse, I wot not.*

23. *For I am in a straight betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

24. *Nevertheless, to abide in the Flesh is more needful for you.*

The Apostle is here debating with himself, whether it were better for him to *Live* or to *Die*? *I am in a straight*, saith he, *betwixt these two*. Verse 23. I know not what to resolve, nor how to determine the matter. *What I shall chuse, I wot not*. Verse 22. On the one hand, *To Live is Christ*, Verse 21. that is, This is the End and Design of my Life, to serve and honour Christ. If I live, my Life shall be spent in Christ's Service. *And to Die is Gain*. That is, If I die, my Death tends to my own unspeakable joy and advantage. For, *to depart and to be with Christ*,

Christ, is far better for me. *Nevertheless to abide in the Flesh, is more needful for you*, Verse 24. That is, Since my Life may be of so great Use to the Church, I am contented, if God so please, to live a little longer, and to continue still amongst you.

But now, if St. *Paul*'s Soul were Mortal, and did Die and Perish with his Body; to be as Nothing, to be Stupid and Insensible till the Resurrection; the Argument is lost. He could be in no straight; there would be no difficulty, how to determine the Case.

For pray, Is it not far more desirable to continue in this World, to be serviceable to Christ and his Church, than by Dying, to be Stupid and Senseless, like a Stock or a Stone, till the Resurrection?

The Truth is so plain and undeniable, it cannot possibly be suppresst.

To suppose here (as a late Writer hath done) that St. *Paul* was *one of Heaven's Favourites, and so* (or as such) *was Raised by an Antecedent Resurrection to Glory.* (Vid. *Farther Thoughts of Human Soul*, P. 57.) This, I say, when strictly examined, is very Impertinent; and is only an Instance of a Baffled Cause.

That St. *Paul* was a Favourite of Heaven, is not doubted: But that all such Favourites shall be Raised '*immediately after their Death, and be* '*Exalted to Glory and Eternal Happi-*'*ness before the Day of Judgment*, (as is pretended), this we deny; and let this Author prove it if he can. But though he confidently Affirms it, he despairs to Prove it; and hath made his Confession in these Words. '*But indeed, I do not find by the whole* '*Current of the Scripture, but that we* '*shall all appear before the Judgment-*'*Seat of Christ, at the end of the World,*

'*and*

'*and not before, and then receive the* '*Just Recompence of our Works.* Vid. '*Second Thoughts*, &c. *P.* 334.

From these Premises it doth appear, That the Soul is an Immortal Being, different and distinct from the Body; and as such is capable to live and subsist without the Body.

Which being granted, *the Certainty of a Future State* (the next Thing to be established), is so evident from the Gospel, I shall not need to insist much upon it.

How plainly doth our Blessed Saviour declare, That at the end of the World, he will come to Judgment: And will then Pronounce a Final, Irreversible Sentence upon all Mankind. The Righteous shall be received with this reviving Absolution, *Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.*

But the wicked shall be dismissed with this Dismal Doom; *Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. And these shall go away into everlasting Punishment: but the Righteous into Life Eternal*, Matth. 25.

And as a further Proof of a Future State, our Blessed Saviour doth thus comfort his Disciples, immediately before his departure from them: *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's House are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto my self, that where I am, there ye may be also*, John 14. 1, 2, 3.

But the Certainty of a Future State is not only thus *Declared* by our Blessed Saviour, but also is plainly *Demonstrated* by his own Re-

surrection

surrection from the Dead, and his Visible Ascension into Heaven.

This is such a sensible Argument, as is levelled to the Capacities of all Mankind; and the shalloweſt Understandings are able to comprehend it. For tho' their Reason may be impoſed on, they will truſt their Senſes.

The moſt certain Things in the World, are liable to the Cavils of Sceptical Men. And there is nothing so plain and evident, but may be obſcured, and may admit of falſe Colours, at leaſt in the apprehenſion of ſome Perſons. For all Men are not capable of the Force of an Argument, nor can truly judge of the Weakneſs or Strength of it. Such Men are very apt to be impoſed on; and to be moved any way, with ſome little ſhew and appearance of Truth.

But

But though these Scepticks may baffle their Reason, they cannot perswade them out of their Senses. Like him, who tho' he could not answer the Philosopher's Arguments against Motion, yet did effectually confute him, by walking before him.

And herein the Wisdom of God hath graciously condescended to the Weakness of Men; in giving such familiar Assurance of these great Truths, the *Resurrection* and *Ascension* of our Lord. For the most Illiterate Person can tell whether a Man be alive or dead. And can as certainly declare, that what he observes is true; if he sees a Man visibly ascend into Heaven. I say, every Man is capable of the Force of this Argument.

And indeed what can be more effectual to convince us of another Life after this, than to see a Man Raised from the Dead, and restored

red to a new Life? And what can be more proper to assure us there is a Heaven, than to see one visibly taken up into it?

And therefore, since God himself hath given us Assurance of a Life to come, by the greatest Demonstrations of it, in the *Death*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension* of his Son; he hath thereby taken away all Suspicions and Doubts concerning a Future State.

But against this, our Modern Scepticks do make this

Objection.

HAD We seen *Jesus* of *Nazareth* Dead, and Alive again: Had we seen him taken down Dead from the Cross, and laid in a Tomb: Had We then after this, not only Seen him, but Conversed with him for Forty days together: And had We then seen him with our own

Eyes,

Eyes, taken up from the Earth into the Air, and visibly Ascending into Heaven; We might then have some Reason to Believe these Things. To this, I

Answer.

IF Men will turn perfect Scepticks, and causelessly suspect the Truth of all such Passages as they did not actually *see* done with their own *Eyes*, or *hear* with their own *Ears*, they are not worthy of Conviction. If this be their Temper, we must then *Turn them to Grass*, and there leave them. But if there is such a thing as *Fides Historica*; and if any Assurance can be had of those Transactions, which are beyond, and above our own Times, there may then be given as certain Evidence of the *Resurrection* and *Ascension* of *Jesus*, as any Passages, transf-

transacted at so great a distance, are capable to admit. For, *These things were not done in a Corner.* But plainly and openly, and in the sight of many Witnesses, and with such remarkable Circumstances, as might best expose them to the strictest Examination.

Now in order to the Conviction of these *Deists* (which is most heartily prayed for) I shall desire them to grant me this *Postulatum*, (which I am sure they cannot deny) *viz.* That *the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus are both Matter of Fact.* And consequently, *can no otherwise be proved, than Matters of Fact use to be.*

When we design to convince another that such a Thing was *Done*, the surest Evidence we can give him, is the Testimony of sufficient Credible Witnesses, who *saw* it done. And he who is not satisfied with

with such a Proof, we look upon him as a Person not fit to be Discoursed with.

Now there was never any Matter of Fact, better or more strongly Attested, than the Truth of this Assertion, *That Jesus Rose from the Dead.* And that, whether we consider the *Nature* of the Thing to be Attested; or the *Number* and *Quality* of the Witnesses Attesting.

First, The Thing to be attested was of that Nature, that it might be fully perceived by those who saw it; that is, It was an *Object* fit and proper to be judged of by their Senses.

As to the Death and Passion of *Jesus* (the necessary Antecedents of his Resurrection) they were plain Objects of Sense; done in the Presence of the whole City of *Jerusalem*, and consequently of his greatest Adversaries. That he truly Died,

all

all the World could testify. No Man's Death was ever more Solemn or Remarkable: Nor was this ever disputed.

So that thus far we are Fix'd and Certain, That if *Jesus* did Rise again, his Resurrection was no *Juggling Trick*, but a Real Miracle.

After his Resurrection, those to whom he Appeared, were frightned at it, supposing him to be a Spirit. But he sufficiently assures them of the contrary, by Appealing to their Senses: *Behold my Hands and my Feet, that it is I my self. Handle me and see, for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as ye see me have,* Luke 24. 39. But,

Secondly, Not only the Nature of the Thing (of which even our Senses are competent Judges) but also the Witnesses attesting, do sufficiently prove *that Jesus is Risen.*

Now

Now there are *two* things must concur to make a Credible Witness, *Knowledge* and *Integrity*.

1. *Knowledge*. No Man ought to be received as a fit Witness in any matter, unless it do appear, that he had the Opportunity fully to inform himself of the Truth of that which he pretends to Attest.

Should any Man affirm, That he *saw* a Thing done, or *heard* a Word spoken; and yet it shall be deposed by as Credible Witnesses as himself, that he was at the same time *Twenty Miles* distant; such *Evidence*, however confidently delivered, must needs be False and Ridiculous.

But now, the Disciples of our Lord had all imaginable Advantages to know the Truth of what they witness, whilst they affirm, *That Jesus is Risen*.

They were his constant Followers and Attendants. And for the space

of

Three Years, were the daily Obſervers of his Converſation. And 'tis worthy your Notice, That when by the *Apoſtacy* of *Judas*, they wanted one of their Number, they were very careful to chuſe ſuch a one to ſucceed him, as had been a conſtant Follower of *Jeſus*, and had taken exact notice of every thing they were to Witneſs. *Wherefore* (ſaith St. *Peter*) *of theſe Men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among us, beginning from the Baptiſm of* John, *unto that ſame day that he was taken up from us, muſt one be Ordained to be a Witneſs with us of his Reſurrection*, Acts 1. 21, 22.

Obſerve here how exact they were in their Choice. They would admit of none, but one who had been with them from firſt to laſt. That could ſpeak things, as we phraſe it, not by *Hear-ſay* only,

but of his own Knowledge. That if any Man ſhould ask him, Did you your ſelf *See*? Or, did you your ſelf *Hear* this which you now Report? That he might then truly anſwer, that he did; and that what he Preached was upon his own knowledge.

Now the Diſciples of our Lord were the conſtant Hearers of his Doctrine; and amongſt other Paſſages, they heard him expreſly declare, That he would Riſe again the Third Day. *Deſtroy this Temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up. But he ſpake of the Temple of his Body*, John 2. 19, 21.

And this Expreſſion of *Riſing the Third Day* was ſo familiar, and ſo often repeated, that the Chief Prieſts and *Phariſees* took notice of it to *Pilate*; ſaying, *Sir, we remember that that Deceiver ſaid, while he was yet alive, After three days I will Riſe again*, Mat. 27. 63. More-

Moreover, The Disciples and Followers our Lord were not only instructed in his Life-time, that he would Rise again; but they likewise saw him after he was Risen. And in such a Manner, with such Circumstances as might most effectually command their Belief.

They *Saw* him, not only once or twice, but several times: They saw him, not only singly and apart, and in lesser Numbers, but all of them yea *Five Hundred* of them at once. And therefore tho' *one* or *two* might perhaps be mistaken, yet so great a number could not possibly be imposed on.

Especially when we have considered further; That they not only *saw* him, but had likewise all other imaginable Evidences to Convince them.

For when he had Appeared to them, and Discoursed with them,

which might also be done by a Spirit; to give them a certain proof that he was no Spirit, *Handle me and see,* (that is, observe and satisfy your selves) *for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as you see me have.*

And lest they might yet scruple, that it was not the same Jesus that was Crucified, but some other Dead Body (which, being moved and actuated by an Angel, did take his Shape, and appear in his Likeness); to remove this Doubt, *Behold,* saith he, *my Hands and my Feet, that it is I my self.* Those Hands and Feet which were pierced with Nails, and fastned to the Accursed Tree. And if you will not believe your *Eyes,* (which according to the vulgar Notion, may have a Mist cast before them) then to satisfy your selves further, take the Proof of another of your Senses. *Handle me and see.* And when St. *Thomas* was a little more

more distrustful than the rest: *Reach hither thy Finger, and behold my Hands, and reach hither thy Hand, and thrust it into my Side, and be not Faithless, but Believing*, John 20. 27.

Now recollect the forementioned Passages, and then Resolve me. What could have been further either said or done to Convince them *That Jesus was Risen?* They *Saw* him, he *Discoursed* with them, did *Eat* before them, they *Touched* him and *Handled* him. And all this variety of Conversation they had with him, not only *once* or *twice*, but for the space of *Forty* Days together.

The Premises considered, you must needs grant, That the Apostles were very sufficient Witnesses of our Blessed Saviour's Resurrection, in respect of their Knowledge. That is, They had all imaginable Advantages to know the Truth of what they Witnessed and Attested,

when they Preached *that Jesus was Risen.*

And the Apostles had the same Capacity to judge of the Truth of his *Ascension*, as they had of his *Resurrection.* For, *while they beheld, he was taken up.* And, *they looked stedfastly toward Heaven as he went up*, Acts 1. 9, 10. That is, they themselves saw him Ascend. They did not only *hear* it from others, but they themselves *saw* it with their own Eyes, which was the highest Evidence that could be given them.

But,

2 *dly.* Supposing their *Knowledge*, and that they had sufficient means of Information; yet whether were they Persons of that Honesty and Integrity as to be believed? or was there not just reason to suspect that they might deliver a Falshood instead of Truth?

And

And for this, let me desire you to consider that known Saying, *Nemo gratis Malus est.* There is scarce any Man so absurd as to be a Villain for nothing, or so impertinently wicked, as to do *Mischief* for Mischiefs sake. Whoever therefore shall presume Publickly and Solemnly to deliver a false Testimony, he must be supposed to do it upon some urging Cause. As, *To Raise himself a Name: To Please a Party: To Advance his Fortune; or to gratify a Revenge.*

Now, *All that is in the World,* saith St. *John, is the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life,* 1 John 2. 16. And whatever the Apostles could propose to themselves, it will be comprehended under one of these Three, *Honours, Riches,* or *Pleasures.*

1. As to *Honour.* They could not expect it, since all Dignities and

Promotions were then in the hands of *Jews* or *Pagans*: From whom they received nothing but Ignominy and Reproach, and by whom they were accounted the Dung of the Earth, and the Off-scouring of the World.

2. As to *Riches*. Instead of gaining an Estate, they were forced to part with all that they had, either by a voluntary resignation, to supply the Wants of others (for at first *they had all things common*), or else by the Fraud and Rapines of their Oppressors. They no sooner came to one City, but they were Persecuted, and forced to *fly unto another*: And by this Ambulatory kind of Life, without any fix'd certain *Being*, they were so far from being able (had they otherwise designed it) to have raised Estates and Fortunes, that they liv'd upon the Alms and Charity of others. And then

3*dly*. What

3*dly.* What kind of Pleaſures they were to expect, as their Maſter did foretell, ſo they themſelves did ſufficiently experience. *In the World ye ſhall have Tribulation. They ſhall lay their hands on you, and perſecute you, and ye ſhall be Betrayed, both by Parents, and Brethren, and Kinſfolks, and Friends; and ſome of you ſhall they cauſe to be put to Death; and ye ſhall be hated of all Men for my Names ſake: Yea the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God Service.*

In ſhort; If Contumelies and Reproaches, if Racks and Priſons, if Flames and Gibbets, with other the moſt Exquiſite Tormenting Deaths; if theſe be Pleaſures, then indeed the Apoſtles and Followers of our Lord had their ſhare of Pleaſures.

And

And now having seriously debated these things, I desire our Sceptical *Deists* to resolve me, What just Cause can be assigned, Why Persons of Sober, Rational Deportment (having the same Principle of Self-Preservation with other Men) should by Publishing the *Resurrection* and *Ascension* of *Jesus*, not only deprive themselves of all Comfortable Enjoyments, but also submit to the greatest Severities, and at last Death it self? I say, What Cause can be assigned of such Self-denial, if they had not the highest Conviction of the Truth of what they Published?

THE

THE CLOSE.

FRom these Premises it undeniably appears; That the Apostles of our Lord were very Credible Witnesses of his Resurrection and Ascension. The Resurrection and Ascension of *Jesus* are a visible, convincing Argument of the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State. *Therefore* it is Certain, *That the Soul is Immortal*; and, *That there is another Life after this.*

FINIS.

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